WORDSWORTHSHIRE

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William Wordsworth.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO A POET'S COUNTRY WRITTEN BY ERIC ROBERTSON, M.A., & ILLUSTRATED WITH FORTY-SEVEN DRAWINGS BY ARTHUR TUCKER, R.B.A., AND MAPS

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SANTA BARBARA

TO
THE MEMORY OF
DAVID MASSON

HIS PUPIL
E. R.

PREFACE

When the reader gets past its brief initial chapter, this book will be found to be neither a Guide to the Lakes nor an analysis of Wordsworth's Complete Works, but a series of suggestions about a Poet's mind in relation to the country in which he dwelt. The starting-point of the study is William Wordsworth's renouncement of Inglewood Forest and its Romance.

As these essays were composed by the author primarily for his own education and for the pleasure of receiving direct impressions, he has avoided, while pursuing his quest, every book on his subject published within the last fifty years. Even the alluring treatise by M. Émile Legouis, *La Jeunesse de William Wordsworth*, has been put aside as a pleasure in store. Indebtedness to old writers and to the living who have helped in this exploration of local material and tradition is recorded, all too imperfectly, in the *Notes*.

Mr. Thomas Hutchinson has edited for the Oxford University Press a complete one-volume collection of Wordsworth's Poems which may be

bought for a florin. With this at hand, a student would find it easy to trace and check the argument of the following pages. The Oxford edition of the Poems forms the basis of the Concordance to "Wordsworthshire" now provided, but this Concordance is designed to be almost equally useful in connexion with editions such as those of Professor Knight and Professor Dowden.

Should anything in chapter sixth move some person of heart and means to come forward and help to rehabilitate the famous Grammar School at Hawkshead on a plan consonant with Wordsworth's expressed ideas, and free from bureaucratic surveillance, the author would rejoice. There is surely room in England for one school conducted on the natural lines which helped Wordsworth and retained that poet's life-long admiration.

Shuter's portrait of Wordsworth was painted in the year when *Lyrical Ballads* appeared. Messrs. George of Bristol publish a photogravure of this picture; and for their courtesy in permitting a reduction from this plate to form our frontispiece, thanks are hereby tendered.

The Vicarage, St. John's,
Windermere.

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WORDSWORTHSHIRE

CHAPTER I

THE MAKERS OF INGLEWOOD FOREST

To understand William Wordsworth, we must understand Inglewood Forest, that haunt of rough romance in which the poet dreamed, not too joyously, as a Penrith schoolboy, and in which, later, he gave ear to the sigh of history, even while he was winning the love of Mary Hutchinson.

Inglewood Forest, as it first looms into our ken, is a tract of country reaching along the lower side of an imaginary line drawn from the Irish Sea at Solway to the German Ocean at Tynemouth, a belt of a breadth represented by the distance between Carlisle and Appleby; a belt, as regards population, ragged and thin at its ends, but closer in texture about the middle—that is to say, all round Penrith.

Of the Celts who came hither in two waves, the first to appear were speakers of Erse or of Gaelic, members of a race that had drifted from Ireland by way of Scotland and Mona, avoiders of valleys, seekers of the high fell-sides. Their area began with Carrock, terminated at Culgaith ("the End of the Garden"), and had Blencow ("the War Tongue") as one of its least elevated yet most important settlements. This

camp lay like an outstretched tongue in the bend of a river—the Petteril. From these Hiberno-Celts we have the foundation of Carlisle, Blencairn, Cargo, Cardurnock, Lamplugh, Dundraw, Gilcrux, Gilgarron, and designations of geographical features such as Glencoin, Glenridding, Glenderamakin.

The Celts from Cambria, entering of course from the south, formed the second wave of historic life in these parts. One of their settlements encompassed what was later called Old Penrith (Plumpton Wall), and stretched south to the foot of Ullswater and north-west to Little Penrith (Penruddock). The Cambrian colonists bequeath to us names such as Cumrew, Cumbria, Helvellyn.

The northern and the southern Celts fought at Barco Hill for dominance of race, and the Cambrians won that necessary mastery. Barco Hill lies at the east root of the Penrith Beacon.

When the Romans pushed upward from London in the direction of Scotland, they erected a strong fort at Old Penrith, between the conqueror Celts and the conquered Celts. The fort was built beside a stream separating these kindred peoples. The Cambro-Celts thought of the fort as "Pedrogyl" ("the Quadrangle"); hence the river still bears their designation: it is the Petteril, dear to anglers. The Hiberno-Celts named the fort "the Square of the River" (Ceathair Leana): hence, the present village of Catterlen. The mountain Ill Bell ("the Beltain Top") was probably used for fire worship by these northern Celts.

In Westmorland and Cumberland the Romans have left us the remains of many camps and several

highways. One great road they struck from York to Old Carlisle, by way of Kirkby Thore (Brovonacae) and Brougham (Brovacum). There was another road from Kirkby Lonsdale to Kirkby Thore by Sedbergh and Shap. The Maiden Way formed a continuation of this thoroughfare, extending past Kirkland and Alston Moor to the Roman Wall of Hadrian at Caervoran, and still another well-paved line of march led from Ambleside, through Troutbeck and over High Street, to Ullswater and Greystoke and Old Penrith.

When the Romans disappeared, and the Teutons arrived, first to harry and then to settle, the Angles bestowed on Cumbria (part of Westmorland was included) the name of Angle Wood—Inglewood Forest. This land that they claimed was a cold and watery desert. When crops were sown here they ripened poorly: the rivers flowed from morass to morass, clogged with rotting trees, while everywhere mist and rain prevailed above grey leagues of scrubby timber. The downs and still higher stretches were alone habitable; therefore these healthier and safer regions had to be fought for inch by inch, and a great many of the loftiest peaks still bear titles that sounded primeval even to the ears of the Celts who fled from stronger invaders to the last resort of wind-swept caves.

Long ere Angles or Saxons moved across the scene, Christianity had found it out, for St. Ninian of Scotland preached by the river Eamont in the end of the fourth century. The structure called Nine Churches, built by the Countess of Pembroke in a Tudor age, marks the site of the wattled chapel

that rose where Ninian planted his episcopal cross. No sanctuary in the land is older, except, perhaps, St. Martin's Church at Canterbury, or part of Glastonbury's foundation. "Worshipping there, St. Augustine would have found himself among people who knew and loved the Gospel which he taught." It is this heritage of Christian teaching, supplied by wistful saints from Scotland long before Gregory was a Pope or Augustine a missionary, that has happily stamped a character on the churches and priests of the north of England wholly ineffaceable. There is a northern *via media* as old as the fourth century.

New Penrith, the present town, was established before the Angles came into Cumbria. Legend connects Penrith and its outskirts with King Arthur and his knights. Even the glorious Round Table of Arthur is identified by some serious antiquaries with the circular earthwork, called by that name, which lies half a mile to the south of the town. In his *Bridal of Triermain* and in other works, Sir Walter Scott accepts the local Arthurian tradition.

It was natural for the Angles, when they made their way into Cumbria from Northumbria, to follow closely the Roman plans of settlement. During two or three centuries they persevered successfully in the domination of the Great Forest, and their towns are still marked out for us by the ending of "ton." They founded, for instance, Dalston, Plumpton, Alston, Stainton, Helton, Barton, Bampton, Dufton, Murton. As one looks at the Ordnance map and notes the names of uplands on the north-eastern border of the present Cumberland, one can almost

SKIDDAW AND BLENCATHARA, SEEN FROM SIDE OF PENRITH BEACON

(In foreground and middle distance, Scumscaw Farm, Church and Castle of Penrith)

see and hear the hordes of Angles descending tumultuously through the Northumbrian passes.

The Angles and Saxons were in turn overthrown or assimilated by the Danes, who moved upwards towards Inglewood after Alfred's victory of Ashdown. The Danes by their place-names have testified that they were not afraid to colonise on the lower slopes or in the valley-deeps. The farm in the foreground of our picture of Penrith is called The Scaws ("The Wood"), and occupies a Danish site. Dockray—a part of Penrith—is so named from the Danish for "Dark Glade." Scumscaw, a part of Penrith that belonged to Wordsworth's grandfather Cookson, and still remains the property of his descendants, was "Dusky Wood." By themselves such epithets tell of the pioneer work the Danes were doing in the lowest expanses of the ancient wilderness. The giant tombstones in Penrith churchyard are by some attributed to this Danish period. Ulfby, Melmerby, and Thorkilby were built by three sons of a conquering Dane. The Danish-Norwegian invaders used "thwaite" as a common name-ending for hamlets, and this means "clearing": another indication of spade work in the Forest. Armathwaite, Culthwaite, Curthwaite, Wallthwaite, Applethwaite, Ormathwaite, Wanthwaite, Thornthwaite, Birthwaite, all lie at the foot of the hills. In Cumberland alone we have forty-three places, the names of which end in "thwaite." Cumberland has likewise forty-three place-names ending in "by," the Danish for "town": as Thursby, Harraby, Hunsonby, Dolphenby. Other Danish-Norwegian name-endings are "thorpe," "with," "beck," "dale," "force," "tarn," "ridding,"

"side," "fell," "ray." Ferguson (*The Northmen in Cumberland and Westmorland*) produces a list of one hundred and fifty families still existing in the district, which bear patronymics either identical with or little changed from early Scandinavian forms.

These Danes, in point of education, gained more from the Anglo-Saxons than they brought to them. The Christianity of to-day's Scandinavia was exported to it from our Angle-Land. In the region of Inglewood Forest, about a score of villages bear compound designations indicating the fusion of British and Danish and Anglo-Christian nomenclatures: Crosby Ravensworth, for example, and Kirkby Thore and Broughton Cross.

Centuries elapsed before Christianity banished from Inglewood the division of men into serfs and freemen. The serfs were looked upon as akin to the lower animals. As for the freeman, he ruled his household like a prince (herein he is the prototype of the "statesman"), and he voted in the "Thing" (Parliament) for election of monarch and for war or for peace. The Scandinavian name for a peasant was "Bonda," which we retain in "husbandman," a designation still employed by Cumberland farmers for a hired cultivator. These husbandman peasants, in the north, held a great amount of land from their Jarls, in a kind of feudal tenure, and their holdings passed as "garths" (farms). In substance the northern Parliaments, or Things, were what is betokened by the Manx Tynwald, the Cheshire Thingwall, and the Scottish Dingwall. The Thing was a "bidden" council, and its deliberations were held in the open air, by moonlight, after feasting

MAYBOROUGH, PENRITH

and sacrifice of oxen. Mayborough, at Penrith, with its circle of trees enclosing a cup-like clearing, was probably a resort of Thing; and the adjacent "King Arthur's Round Table" was likely a circle where personal disputes were settled by public duel known as the Holmgang, because this arbitrament generally took place (as they say) on a "holm," or island. The Penrith Round Table consists of a circular plateau embraced by a ditch: a formation not uncommon in the remains of Danish settlements. May not the Holmgang have been a public tournament for which an encircling canal created an artificial island, whereon the combatants might be as free to murder each other as boxers in our ring are free to spar?

While the tenth century was emerging from its first decade, King Edward the Elder successfully grappled with the Danish power in Cumbria. His son, Athelstan, was equally strong, conquering two northern chiefs, Guthred and Donal. At Dacre, near Ullswater, with these deferential foemen by his side, Athelstan solemnly sat in the "Hall of the Three Kings," and in this manner he concluded a suzerainty over all the north.

The Norman Rufus came from the south almost one hundred and seventy years later, repaired and fortified Carlisle, and established the castles of Brougham, Appleby, Brough, and Pendragon. Like the Danish Jarls, these Norman monarchs largely based their strategic settlements upon the military dispositions of the Romans. Why, for instance, do we find Brougham Castle, once one of the cruellest and most renowned of Cumbrian strongholds, actually

so low-lying that it is beneath the level of the nearest modern road? The answer is, Here was the only ford across the river Eamont feasible for warlike hordes attempting to raid southward. This passage gained security from its mighty Roman fort, and was connected, north and south, with main thoroughfares. The ford was of equal importance in the eyes of the Normans, and thus it is that we have their castle lying cheek by jowl with the Roman camp. Night and day, as in Roman times, Brougham Ford was overlooked by a keep, while also closely patrolled on the river's very edge by soldier-watchmen, who could at any moment communicate with the far-sweeping Beacon on the other side of the water.

In the fourteenth century we find Inglewood Forest comparatively civilised, though restricted by boundaries which cut off large portions on the south, east, and west—Cockermouth Castle and its domains being thus excluded—and which drew their new line from Carlisle through Thursby, Ellonby, Blencow, Pallat Hill, Mile Lane, Skirsgill, Eamont Bridge, Brougham, the junction of Eamont and Eden, and back to Carlisle by the Eden Valley. Still, somewhat as at the period of the Conquest, it was "a goodly great forest, full of woods, red deer and fallow, wild swine, and all manner of wild beasts." We should note that in these days, "forest" rather meant virgin hunting-ground than, necessarily, woodland.

Such, anciently, had been the country that now lay at the feet of young William Wordsworth, ready to acknowledge itself his poetic inheritance.

CHAPTER II

PENRITH, THE CAPITAL OF THE FOREST

While Norman keeps and castles were rearing their battlements in the Forest, Penrith town was advancing most prosperously, a free borough enjoying the market and fair bestowed on it by Henry III. At the end of the thirteenth century, Edward I. received from John Balliol of Scotland the manors of Penrith, Sowerby, Great Salkeld, and Carleton and Scotby. These estates eventually became dowers for the queens of England. Charles II. granted to Catharine, as part of her marriage settlement, the honour of Penrith, the Forest of Inglewood, and a hundred manors, including that of Carlisle. The Castle of Penrith had been founded early in the fifteenth century by a powerful Earl of Westmorland, to protect the free town of Penrith and the south from the Scots.

In Tudor times, as the nation settled, numberless half-fortified halls, rather the homes of substantial yeomen than the property of a minor aristocracy, sprang up in a lowly security guaranteed by the proximity of the older strongholds. It is noted in Queen Elizabeth's reign that throughout the country round Penrith "there are no gentry," but the same chronicle adds regarding Penrith itself: "this town being a free town for all persons, none man's person can be arrested; but his goods may."

Penrith always was more or less what it is now—a town of hearty folk, semi-bucolic in origin, not fond of manufactures so much as of cattle-dealing and general trading and farming; a mixture of many sturdy races, and open-minded with the frankness that comes to burghers through whose town all sorts of nationalities flow. When the eighteenth century was about half-way through its course, Penrith might have been reckoned a place of nearly fifteen hundred inhabitants. Its streets meandered with an engaging waywardness, like rivers, and had confluences in great open spaces. The terms employed to denote the district divisions of the town show how Danish was the original disposition of the place: Dockray, Middlegate, Sandgate, Burrowgate, Netherend. The houses had slated roofs, and—whitewashed or not—were built of sandstone hewn from Beacon Hill, the Red Hill that gained for Penrith its stirring Celtic name. The parish church was the present spacious but uninteresting building, erected in 1720. Its churchyard was unfenced, ill-kept, the scene of disorders at night, the feeding-place of sheep and pigs by day. A Cross in the principal market-place stood opposite the entrance to the church steps. Round the Cross settled the countrywomen, on market-days, selling their eggs and butter. There, also, waited the farm-servants at the half-yearly "Hirings." Near the Cross was the old Moot Hall, where local affairs were discussed and (some say) banns were published. Against these parliamentary walls the apprentices played lawful tennis. The wooden corners of the Moot Hall were decorated with the Bear and Ragged Staff of the Warwicks, who had once been in charge

of Penrith's "honour." East of the Moot Hall was the Roundabout House, consisting of two stories and cellars, with shops in the first floor, and butchers' stalls gathered about the building, protected by pent roofs. No houses of merchandise in the town had then glass windows. Watchmen, paid by the shopkeepers, patrolled the streets all night. From the great emporiums, like Whitehaven and Newcastle, goods came by pack-horses. Twenty of these animals, trained to attend the movements of a "bell-horse," would, with their four-footed leader, be under the control of a single master. Cattle and sheep passed through Penrith in thousands for Brough and marts still farther south, but by the time Scottish cattle had reached Penrith many of the beasts were foot-sore. Living men tell us they have assisted of nights, by torchlight, to shoe such cattle, as they stood weary and angry in the fields. Each division of the hoof had a metal plate nailed on to it. Bull-baiting existed in the town till about 1790, for the populace excused this cruel entertainment as advertising the advent of bull's meat to the town. No sooner did the cry go round, "The bull's at the steaak," than the shopkeepers put up their shutters and locked their doors and set off for the sport, in Dockray or Sandgate. Farming and brewing and the trades incidental to a town full of inns were the main support of a people among whom few were very poor or very rich. Whenever anybody of importance died, doles from the deceased person's property were distributed to the humble folk. Streams of travellers flowed through Penrith to and from Scotland. Almost as large numbers of people came from Ireland, by

way of Portpatrick and Whitehaven. The only manufactures of the town were "checks," and woollen stockings for the army. The townsfolk, in spite of their exposed state, had given pretty loyal support to the Hanoverians against the Jacobites. Prince Charlie, for instance, in the "Forty-Five," as he marched through Penrith, kissed some of the ladies; but his hold on the place was allowed to last scarce longer than his kisses.

It was in the "Forty-Five" that Penrith Beacon, used for so many years by Celt, Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, to flame war news across the Border, was set blazing for the last time. In this "Forty-Five" the Receiver-General for the county of Cumberland was Richard Wordsworth, who had been Sir James Lowther's agent from 1723 to 1738. Richard Wordsworth left his home at Sockbridge, three miles from Penrith, to hide in Patterdale, with the county's money in his charge, while his wife remained to guard the house, in which she courageously entertained parties of the rebel officers till Sir James Lowther and others were able to clear the land of these gentry.

The Receiver was an attorney, bred in Yorkshire, of a family whose name was originally Wadsworth, taken from Wadsworth ("the Woollen Cloth Town") near Halifax, or from Wadworth near Doncaster. Richard, according to the appendix in Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoir* of his uncle William Wordsworth, was the son of a squire of Falthwaite, near Stainborough, Yorkshire, who had to part with his landed property in consequence of being led into imprudent speculations in coal-mines. The earliest entry in the church register of Sockbridge's parish

YANWATH HALL, PENRITH, AND PENRITH BEACON

(Seen from Sockbridge)

church of Barton describes him as "Richard Woodsworth": but this was likely a mere error. Richard married Mary, daughter of John Robinson, Mayor of Appleby. This lady was not, as some have written, a daughter of "Jack Robinson," once member of Parliament for Appleby: she was Jack's aunt. Jack Robinson's only daughter Mary—presumably named after her great-aunt—married the Marquis of Abergavenny. Here we find out why William's sea-faring brother John called his vessel *The Earl of Abergavenny.* Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wordsworth were married, May 25, 1732, in Lowther Church; and at Sockbridge Farm, near the more important Sockbridge Hall, they had three children: Richard; John, baptized November 27, 1741; and Anne. Anne married the Reverend Thomas Myers in 1763. Young Richard, who displeased his father by allying himself to a Yorkshire cousin, Elizabeth Favell, became a Customs officer at Whitehaven, and at his house there his mother died in 1770. She was buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas. Documents connected with Richard, now in the possession of Mr. Gordon Wordsworth and Mr. George Browne of Townend, Troutbeck, establish the fact that Richard Wordsworth (although Lowther registers rate him as "steward" only from 1728) was agent for the Lowthers from at least 1723. In that year there are several transactions of Lowther business between him and Benjamin Browne of Troutbeck. In that year also he writes to Benjamin Browne as unmarried, but desirous of union in matrimony with a neighbour of Browne's, Miss or Mrs. Jackson. A Mr. Knott was

also paying attentions to this lady, who had a fortune ; and perhaps Mr. Knott won her. We know that she did not marry Richard. Richard Wordsworth, one finds from Mr. Gordon Wordsworth's documents, was appointed Clerk of the Peace for Westmorland in 1745 and acted in that capacity, both at Appleby and at Kendal, till the end of 1750. It is curious that the earliest entries in the documents just mentioned refer to Richard as "Mr. Wadsworth" or "Mr. Woodsworth."

In Burrowgate, Penrith, lived a prosperous family of Cooksons—a family that can be traced back to the sixteenth century. It was a race of tradesmen—tincklers (braziers), mercers, grocers, jewellers. A William Cookson, brazier, of Penrith, had about 1710 asserted his Nonconformity so stoutly as to be excommunicated along with his wife Alice, and a daughter of his married James Cunningham, a Scot who was Presbyterian minister at Penrith. William, although a dissenter, was compelled by the law to have his children baptized and registered in church, but few of his grandchildren were so baptized or registered—a proof that for some time after the passing of the Toleration Act of 1689, the Cookson family remained Nonconformist. One of these grandchildren was William Cookson, mercer, of Burrowgate, Penrith, born in 1711. His name is to be found five or six times in the Penrith church register, as that of warden. Mr. George Watson, in his pamphlet, *The Wordsworth-Hutchinsons*, seems to be wrong in attributing these signatures to a cousin, a grocer—who was also called William Cookson. William, the warden, had two pews in the

north gallery of the church, Nos. 57 and 161. His shop, as has been ascertained by inspection of existing title-deeds, almost certainly stood where Mr. Arnison's drapery store now figures conspicuously at the top of the market-place. William Cookson several times appears in the Baron's Court Book of Penrith as owning extensive property. There were three courts still wielding power in the town, and it is interesting to figure Churchwarden William Cookson as bearing his bustling part in them.

The first of these three assemblies was "The Court Leet and View of Frankpledge." It was a venerable institution that sat at Easter and Michaelmas, under a steward, to inquire of all delinquencies, short of treason, among the inhabitants of the town. Every one dwelling within the Leet (list), from twelve to sixty years of age, was bound to suit or service in this court, which proceeded by jury; and each jury served also as supervisor of town morals for half a year. Pillory and stocks, next to fines, were the means of punishment affected by the Leet juries. The second assembly was the Court Baron, analogous to our County Court. It had jurisdiction over the freeholders of the manor, was managed by a steward and at least two freeholders, and decreed in cases of debt under forty shillings. The third assembly was what, to us, is the most interesting of all. The "Court of Pie-powdre" (*Pieds-Poudreux*) dealt summarily with dusty-footed brawlers on market days and fair days. It is, indeed, not quite certain from our available records that this court sat systematically in William Cookson's time; but probably he had occasional opportunities for attending it. Fairs then

were still held in virtue of a proclamation which ended thus: "And if any difference should happen about any bargain, or any other matter relating to merchandise, thereupon proper notice shall be given to the Steward, and the Court of Pie-powdre shall immediately be summoned to settle the difference."

The church registers on frequent occasions give lists of the rateable townsmen, and among these, in his day, Cookson figured as one of the wealthiest; four times as wealthy as his cousin, William Cookson, the grocer. William the mercer, having built up a good business that probably extended far beyond counter-work, allied himself to a family of pedigree and position. He married Dorothy, daughter of Christopher Crackanthorpe of Newbiggin Hall. The exact date of this step in William Cookson's social advancement we do not know. The couple had their first child registered in church on October 26, 1742: "Crackanthorpe, Richard, son of Mr. William Cookson, baptized." On the 20th of January, 1745, "Ann, daughter of Mr. Cookson, mercer, was baptized." All registers, be it noted, spell this lady's name without the final "e" which biographers of the poet, following the example of the poet himself, give to his mother's Christian designation.

The Crackanthorpes were probably not very proud about the daughter of their ancient race marrying a mercer. When the Crackanthorpe-Cooksons came to compile their family pedigree, they omitted mention of William Cookson's occupation; and they ignored the very name and existence of William's grandson, the poet Wordsworth. William Wordsworth, in his Autobiographical Note, tells us explicitly of his being

PENRITH CHURCHYARD

("Giant's Graves," and, in nearest foreground, Hutchinson family tomb)

the grandson of a mercer. Dorothy Wordsworth sometimes served in her grandfather's shop. It is almost essential to any study of the poet that the mental point of view adopted by William and Dorothy Wordsworth on the question of family and associates should be recognised. They had very good blood in their veins, from both sides of the family, but their early *milieu* was bourgeois, and most of their dearest early friends were bourgeois; all through life, to state matters plainly, they were democratic to a degree that put them out of touch with Newbiggin.

It will be remembered that one of the two sons of Richard Wordsworth of Sockbridge, lawyer, land-agent, and farmer, was named John. John Wordsworth was brought up to the legal profession under his father's care at Sockbridge, and as an apprentice he often visited Penrith, three miles distant from his home. At Penrith he fell in love with William Cookson's daughter Ann. For many years Richard had been detached from Sir James Lowther's employment; but that fact did not prevent Sir James from keeping his eye on Richard's son John, who, his apprenticeship finished, received the well-paid appointment of steward to Sir James on a great portion of the Lowthers' Whitehaven estate. Sir James had at one time instructed a political agent to buy up for him many of the Cockermouth houses, with the burgages and votes attached to these freeholds. The political agent was "Jack Robinson," who became M.P. for Appleby, as Sir James's nominee; later he quarrelled with Sir James over money matters, and carved out his own fortunes so cleverly as to

become member for Harwich, and a Secretary of the Treasury. In 1745 Joshua Lucock, Sheriff of the county, whose name may still be read on the lintel-stone, built a handsome house in the main street of Cockermouth. This house was designed somewhat after the plan of contemporary French châteaux, and several mansions of the kind arose in Cumberland about this time. Sheriff Lucock's house was one of those which had been bought for political purposes by Sir James Lowther, who put into it as tenant his agent, John Wordsworth. Almost as soon as he was installed in this great building, seemingly much too grand for a newly-fledged bachelor attorney, John Wordsworth took to himself for wife his Penrith sweetheart. The event is chronicled thus in the register of Penrith Church: "John Wordsworth of the Parish of Cockermouth, Bachelor, and Ann Cookson, of this Parish, spinster and minor; married in this church by License this Fifth Day of February, 1766, by me John Cowper, Vicar, in the presence of Eliz: Threlkeld and J. W. H. Cowper." Ann, as we have seen, had been baptized on January 20, 1748, and was therefore at the time of her wedding eighteen years of age. The bridegroom was twenty-five. Some years afterwards the vicar who married the pair, Mr. Cowper, gave his own daughter in marriage to Ann Wordsworth's brother, the Rev. Dr. William Cookson, who rose to be Canon of Windsor. Dorothy was a favourite name about Penrith. Miss Cowper's name was Dorothy; and her marriage was attested (1788) by Dorothy Wordsworth.

WORDSWORTH'S BIRTHPLACE, COCKERMOUTH

CHAPTER III

COCKERMOUTH, ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST

Cockermouth, clean, smiling, self-respecting — a town that was never imposing or important, takes its name from a meeting of waters. The Derwent washes its northern side, drawing its springs from Glaramara's mosses, and reaching the town through the lakes of Keswick and Bassenthwaite, to fall into the sea at last in the harbour of Workington. The Derwent at Cockermouth passes over a bed of blue slate, and thus acquires that steely sparkle in its easy waters which Wordsworth notes. It is bluer than the blue Eamont. The poet never mentions the neighbour stream that falls more noisily from Buttermere and Crummock Water, through Lorton Vale, and ends its sufficiently gracious course by merging in the Derwent a few hundred yards below the eminence on which the present parish church is built. Whether the Celts named this brook, though failing for once to exhibit their power to bestow haunting appellations on the running waters, is not certain; but the stream is unfortunate among fortunate rivers: it is called the Cocker.

The old castle, of obscure twelfth-century origin, had formerly dominated the Derwent and its brother brook and the town, though to the poet the shaggy pile was only a "shattered" monument of feudal sway. The castle stands on an artificial mound

which crowns a precipice overlooking the whole plain that undulates towards the great hills. This stronghold was seized and held on behalf of the Parliament at an early stage in the Civil War of the reign of Charles the First. A desperate attempt to reduce it was made later by the Royalists under Sir William Huddleston of Millom, but it was relieved by Colonel Ashton on the approach of Cromwell to Carlisle. The castle and lordship are now in the possession of Lord Leconfield.

To another castle of the neighbourhood, Egremont Castle—like the fortress of Cockermouth, an old Lucy possession, and now also the property of Lord Leconfield — Wordsworth characteristically attaches a legend of feudal greed and robbery. The story, really belonging to the mansion of Hutton John, Wordsworth entitles *The Horn of Egremont Castle.*

The only shadow that rests on the fair, fortunate Derwent is that of the fairer, unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. On the thirteenth of May, 1568, after her escape from Loch Leven and her rout at Langside, Mary rode headlong to the Abbey of Dundrennan on the Solway coast, sixty miles from the field of battle. At Dundrennan the Queen embarked in a fishing-boat, from which she landed at the mouth of the Derwent. Sir Henry Curwen received her at Workington Hall, whence the fugitive addressed to her sister Elizabeth the historic appeal dated May 17th. On withdrawing from Curwen's hospitality, Queen Mary presented her trusted entertainer with a small agate drinking cup, now styled "The Luck of Workington." The chief gentlemen of the neighbourhood, among them Lamplugh of Lamplugh Hall,

COCKERMOUTH CASTLE

Skelton of Branthwaite Hall, and Musgrave of Loweswater, with great respect escorted to Cockermouth the exquisite monarch "of alluring grace, pretty Scottish speech, and searching wit clouded with mildness." "No man," says Brantôme, "ever beheld her without love and admiration, or thought of her fate without sorrow or pity." At Cockermouth William Fletcher, merchant and manufacturer, attended to Mary's needs with every deference. His hall provided a sumptuous reception for the Queen, and as the sovereign had nothing but a frayed riding-habit to her back, Fletcher seized the gratification of sending her clothes of costly velvet, which present brought him an autograph letter of acknowledgment. Under Fletcher's roof Queen Mary rested till the English government should determine what was to be done with its bewitching foe. When the State determined to detain Scotland's ruler in restraint, Sir Richard Lowther, Sheriff of Cumberland, received commands to carry the royal lady to Carlisle Castle as honourably as the means of the county would permit.

Meanwhile the Earl of Northumberland, to whom Cockermouth Castle belonged, and who was one of the keenest of those who were plotting to re-establish Popery in England—he who led "The Rebellion of the Northern Earls"—hastened to his Derwent home to receive Mary. But that he arrived a day or so too late, the Earl's powerful retinue would probably have added another to the many picturesque escapes which make up no inconsiderable portion of Mary's breathless reign. Fate ruled that now Queen Mary was to rest from all perils save the possibility of execution. From Carlisle she was conducted to

the captivity of nineteen years, ending at "the ensanguined block of Fotheringay." Frail, fond humanity! How its pulses still stir at thought of Cockermouth as the footstool of a week for her who was "dear to the loves and vowed to the graces"! Even Wordsworth, for Mary's sake, throws away his usual indifference to war's glamour of vicissitude. The Queen's fortunes in Cumberland thrice furnish him with chivalrous meditations. In 1817 the "smile of the Moon" brought before his eyes the piteous pageant of the woman "born all too high, by wedlock raised still higher" (*Lament of Mary Queen of Scots*). Two years later, he composed the sonnet on Mary's *Captivity*. In 1833, on a soft summer's evening, the poet's eye, lingering on a cloudlike mass of pine-tree foliage poised in the air, saw shoot through its enshrouding gloom a smiling star, and this it was—a sight he had often marked and pondered—which suggested his picture of *Mary Queen of Scots landing at the mouth of the Derwent*. "To the throng how touchingly she bowed, smiling like a star." Smile of the Moon! Smile of the Evening Star! "Time, the old Saturnian seer, sighed on the wing, as her foot pressed the strand." Hawthorne once said, in a phrase that illuminates the Cumbrian's worthy readings of the Queen Mary episode, and makes one more patient in awaiting America's development of a large sense for creative literature, "It takes a great deal of history to make a little poetry."

The name of St. Cuthbert, the Scottish missionary of the seventh century who did so much to Christianise the north of England, is picturesquely associated with

the Derwent. His work in Northumberland was nearly destroyed by the Danes. When he died, his followers wandered about for seven years, from crag to crag, cavern to cavern, in Westmorland and Cumberland, bearing with them the body of their master. The mists only lift above them when record tells of their arriving, exhausted, provisionless, at the mouth of the Derwent, meditating further flight to Ireland. This was in King Alfred's time. The story of Alfred's spiritual direction by these Cuthbertines (who did not cross the Channel after all) is accessible in the old chronicles, and perhaps furnishes the only kind of claim that we can allow to Lakeland as having directly impinged on English history. The Cuthbertine legend is one well fitted for poetic treatment. Wordsworth left it severely alone, except for a casual line or two in *The Borderers*, in the *Inscription for St. Herbert's Isle*, and in canto three of *The White Doe of Rylstone*. It may well be wondered how he could avoid the theme, when giving the world his matured views of English Church history in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* of 1822.

From the thoroughfare of Cockermouth, about 1770, every house branched north or south. Each house was entered from the single street, to which, formerly, access from the country could be had only through a town gate. The back door of the house led into, first, the yard, and, secondly, the garden. The gardens, on the north side of the street, abutted on the Derwent. On the south side of the street they reached to the town wall, through which they had outlet by private doors to the pastures and the common land. This common land was beginning to

suffer from encroachment by the Lowthers, at our period. Sir James, fussing about in his black smalls, silks, buckles, cocked hat, and always with a prodigious nosegay, "the provincial monarch of unmeasured lands," was a shadow of feared success, rather than a man beloved, in Cumberland; and we have to remember that his agent would hardly win the affection of neighbours by the nature of his occupation among them.

The Cockermouth Moot Hall, constructed in Tudor times, still dignified the town. Among its arches John Wordsworth's children played, and from its steps John Wordsworth's banns had been called out. Till times later than this, debtors were exhibited at the top of this stair, in the stocks; and if money was found in their pockets, two of the coins were pasted over the defaulters' eyes.

The church of these days (burnt down in 1850) was a simple building, but ennobled by its position in one of the stateliest churchyards of the county. Mr. Joseph Gillbanks was the vicar of the parish, though during part of his incumbency many Nonconformists of Cockermouth denied his right to be so called. Mr. Gillbanks married four times. He was not only incumbent of Cockermouth, but head master of the Free Grammar School in the town. Eventually the turbulent folk with revolutionary ideas were too strong for this priest, who retired to the living of Culgaith.

Some curious customs attached to Cockermouth church. For instance, it had a midwife licensed to it, and her duty was not merely to superintend the ushering of children into the world, but to see that

THE MOOT HALL, COCKERMOUTH (PULLED DOWN IN 1826)

(*From an old print*)

these little ones were (privately or publicly) baptized. There still exists a silver baptismal font inscribed, "The gift of Mrs. Ann Peill, Midwife to the Church of Cockermouth, for the use of Baptism, May 23rd, 1772."

William Wordsworth and Dorothy just missed being received at this font, but it is likely that Mrs. Peill, glorying in her status as a church officer, was present on the occasion subsequently to be chronicled as taking place in November of this same year 1772. Each sexton of Cockermouth, on devolving duty to his successor, was bound to hand over the public shroud, the public coffin, and two "shuffles" (shovels). It had been actually frequent for the bodies of poor people to be wrapped in this common shroud and put into the parish coffin for conveyance to the grave, by the side of which the human clay was deprived of its brief cold decencies, and tumbled stark into the ground. A curious light this throws upon a rubric of the Burial Service:

> "When they come to the Grave, while the Corpse is made ready to be laid into the earth, the Priest shall say, or the Priest and Clerk shall sing, Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery."

This custom of burying the dead without coffins pertained in the Kendal region as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Dr. Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoir* of the poet gives us to understand that John Wordsworth had general practice as an attorney, and was in the way of acquiring a fortune. In the Court Rolls of Whitehaven Castle may be read records of his rounds as "Steward of Ennerdale," statedly holding

manorial courts at Seaton, Stainburn, and Clifton (near Workington).

John Wordsworth and Ann, his wife, lived a quiet life in their great house. Children came to them, and this is the true list of their births and baptisms, copied from the church register:

Baptized: Richard, son of Mr. John Wordsworth, gentleman, Sept. 29, 1768.

(Query, comparing this entry with the next, are we to suppose that in 1768 John had not qualified as attorney?)

Baptized: William, son of John Wordsworth, Attorney at Law, aged 1 year 9 months and eleven days.
Dorothy, his Daughter, aged 3 weeks and 2 days. } 18 Jany. 1772.

(Here we note that the parents, for some reason, had long delayed William's public baptism, and seemingly Dorothy was not born on a Christmas Day, as Christopher Wordsworth avers. Christopher states that William was "born April 7, baptized April 13.")

Baptized: Christopher, son of Mr. John Wordsworth, attorney, aged Twenty nine Days
8° (*sic*) 1774.

(The Family Memoir says that he was born June 9 and baptized July 8.)

Richard became an attorney of Staple Inn, London, and died in 1816. Christopher rose to be Master of Trinity, Cambridge, and died in 1846. John (brother of the poet), is said in the Family Memoir to have been "born 4th December, 1772; baptized at Cockermouth." The register does not mention this John, who was wrecked and drowned off the coast of Weymouth in 1805, while in com-

mand of the East Indiaman *Earl of Abergavenny*. Reflection on the curious entry about William, and on the lack of entry about John, leads one to hazard a guess that, owing to her own delicacy or that of her sons, Mrs. Wordsworth caused William and John to be baptized "privately" at her home, with the intention of seeing that later they were "received" at church, with the second portion of the Church of England Baptismal Service: that this receiving was carried out for William when Dorothy was baptized in church, but was forgotten or otherwise omitted, in the case of John. John somehow slipped out of his place in the family list of the church register.

These four children were all remarkable for originality of character, which was perhaps better fostered in their case by a profitable negligence on their parents' part than it would have been by the modern governess plan—almost the only plan that can be adopted for systematic teaching of children of such a position in a town furnished with only one school, and that, badly taught and badly equipped. The Grammar School was indeed attended by William, and possibly by his brothers, but only in a half-hearted, desultory way. We are told by William Wordsworth that he learnt almost nothing from Mr. Gillbanks's instruction. The schoolhouse was close to the church, on the site of the present church hall. Wordsworth's mother, at the catechising time before Easter, took care to dress her boy well and to deck him with a nosegay in his bosom, so that he might walk sprightlily in the procession from school to church. A Sunday class was conducted in the upper part of the school building;

tradition holds that there was this Sunday-school for years before the appointment of a rate-paid Sunday-school teacher in 1786: it taught reading and writing to children of the poor employed during the week, and is to be observed as anticipating the general movement inaugurated by Robert Raikes. The lower story of the structure was reserved for the day-school, whence William once escaped to view a woman, wrapt in a white sheet, doing penance before the altar rail of the church. He had been told that if he attended this act as a witness he would receive a penny, and to his mother he reported his disappointment at receiving no guerdon of any kind.

Mrs. Wordsworth found her second boy a difficult child to guide—one might say, an impossible child. On his own showing, he was of a stiff and violent temper, wedded to his own moods, brooking only his sister Dorothy for companion, and her, not always; for he loved to fish in solitude, or, solitary, to spend the day over books of romance by the Derwent, with an idle rod at hand—or to bathe for hours in the river or the mill-stream near, running about Indian-wise, naked to even the storms—but not unobservant of old Skiddaw gleaming in the sun across the belt of hail. Ann Wordsworth said often that her boy William would become either a very good man or a very bad man. What with the inefficiency of Gill-banks and the absences of his father, and the not unthoughtful indulgence granted by his mother, the poet-boy was free to steep himself in the beauty of his surroundings. These surroundings have one special significance in the poet's evolution. Cocker-mouth, not a kind of cosmopolitan mart as Penrith

THE DERWENT, SEEN FROM JOHN WORDSWORTH'S TERRACE, COCKERMOUTH

was, had the unmistakable characteristics of the Cumberland folk fully developed among its inhabitants, and yet it was on the outer edge, only, of the Mountain Land. It lay in a debatable region, fully as much linked to the Carlisle plains as to the Lake Country proper. Even at this day it is regarded as barely inside the now-classic district. Thus there seemed to lie in Cockermouth, for Wordsworth, a kind of auspicious tempering by which he should be attuned to the music of wind and waterfall among the impending mountains. It is while the exultant child flies naked along the meadows, under the blast scudding down from Skiddaw, that we most clearly see the poet and the prophet in the making. At nine, he was expert at snaring birds—that sport of starlight. In these child-farings he seemed, even to himself, a trouble to the peace that reigned among the steady lights of the sky. Sometimes he stole the birds that other night-watchers had trapped, and in his homeward way the guilty boy fancied himself pursued by steps almost as silent as the turf they trod. In the terraced garden of their stately home, he and Dorothy one day were startled to notice two blue eggs gleaming from the dusky privets of the terrace walls. Though almost ashamed to spy, the boy drew near to the discovered nest; but Dorothy shrank away, with a girl's benignant, shy modesty, afraid to intrude on the happiness of the mother-bird. Dorothy gave her brother ears, she gave him eyes, humble cares, delicate fears, and touched a fountain in his heart. When he chased a butterfly in the garden or over the sward of Cockermouth Castle, his sister feared for the

brushing of the dust from its wings. As they paused in their ecstatic games, the children heard the murmurs of that fairest river which had mingled its music with their nurse's song. From its shadowed alders and rocky falls, a voice issued that flowed along the boy's dreams, composing his thoughts to a softness beyond that of an ordinary child's, and giving him a dim earnest of the calm he was to find, breathed by nature through hills and groves. Later, he thanked God that he and his beloved river Derwent had both been nursed among the mountains within the floating shadow of eagles' wings—a freedom far prouder than that of any Nemæan victor dragging chained captives at his car. But there was darkness too for the child-poet, roaming through the feudal castle; soul-appalling darkness: these dungeons breathing, as from the very grave of all things, a mute lesson for the mute questioners. Chiefly the child lived at a high tide of almost overbalancing happiness; ecstasy probably never attained by any other child; positive child-inspiration, beyond, for example, the cheer that the lame boy lying in the sun by Smailholm Tower caught from castle ruins and heather stretches and the ballads crooned by his girl-guardian—even beyond the trances in which the boy Shelley was comrade of the West Wind, while it wandered over heaven. Like Lakeland itself, the child-nature of Wordsworth had a budding exquisiteness of joy concealed in its every outward, wayward gloom. His heart leapt up when he beheld the rainbow. Such a holy calm would overcome his spiritual being (at Cockermouth and Hawkshead) that bodily eyes were forgotten, and what he saw appeared to

come from within, a prospect of the child-mind. These days were more important to the fostering of Wordsworth's prophetic power than any schooling he received at Hawkshead, any academic training at Cambridge, any suggestion received from French Revolutionist or English Coleridge, any "obstinate questionings of sense and outward things," making up the second phase of his power-expansion. At Cockermouth took place one of the greatest irradiations of the soul by the Spirit of God that can be found in the annals of man. Even the glooms of child-Wordsworth were the glooms of power, not of weak fear. "Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being." "I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent, in my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree, to recall myself." This was the period, so big with healing calm for thinkers in each subsequent generation, when the meadows, groves and streams of sheep-selling Cockermouth were to one child in its midst apparelled in celestial light with the glory and the freshness of a dream. Delight and liberty were his simple creed. Heaven lay about that infant in his infancy, and a vision splendider than any other boy's was with him as, like all who are to become great, he mused away his childhood in a solitude that dismayed even those dearest to him. "Simple childhood sits upon a throne more powerful than all the elements." From this eminence of child-liberty Wordsworth was to pass to ground humbler, yet "a tract in the same isthmus." The passing takes place when the school-

boy has turned his back on Hawkshead, entranced and a-tiptoe.

In a passage of the thirteenth book of the *Prelude* (142), we have described to us a public way that wound itself up a hill, crossing the naked summit, and vanishing into space, "like an invitation or a guide into eternity." The sight was "daily present" to the eyes of the child. Professor Knight and Dr. Dodgson see this naked summit in the road stretching from Cockermouth to Isel, at a spot called The Hay. Much may be said for this theory; especially may it be argued that it gives us a summit "beyond the limits" that the child's "feet had trod." Yet Wordsworth affirms that the summit was daily present to his eyes. This probably means that he saw it whenever he lifted up his gaze to the horizon, while playing in his home garden. Now, to see the summit of the Isel road, the spectator must reach the western end of the terrace, and turn his eyes to the extreme east. From no other part of the garden could it by any possibility be descried. Dr. Dodgson, had he been able to think himself through the huge modern Thread Mill that occupies the meadow on the other side of the Derwent from Wordsworth House, would have found a winding path, formerly a rider's highway to Carlisle by Woodhall, which climbs and disappears over Micklebrows, a summit still, as in the eighteenth century, almost devoid of trees. This summit of Micklebrows would be daily surveyed by William from any part of the garden or terrace. The *Prelude* passage was written in 1800, interpreting a boyish impression. To a child, distances are things of illusion, more often than not. The Micklebrows road disappears on the

MICKLEBROWS, SEEN FROM JOHN WORDSWORTH'S GARDEN, COCKERMOUTH

horizon only a short mile from the garden. But all things considered, our picture of the garden and Micklebrows is likely the true note upon this question of the naked summit which worked so much upon the dreaming minds of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, when they lifted their eyes from flowers, butterflies, and sparrows' eggs. And here the reader is asked to turn to a seldom-considered poem, written by Wordsworth in 1800. It occurs among the verses on *The Naming of Places*, and begins, "There is an eminence." The eminence is Stone Arthur, by Grasmere, as a prose note by our author informs us. The lines tell of the twenty-year-old poet sitting beside his slightly younger sister, to mark this peak so lofty, distant, sequestered; the haunt of meteors; beloved of Jupiter; often, at eventide, sending its own deep quiet to restore the hearts of the proud poet and his loyal sister. This was the loneliest place they had among the clouds. Dorothy, whom the author loved "with such communion that no place on earth could ever be a solitude" to him, called this summit by William's name. We feel that the wistful, brave outlook of the children towards Micklebrows and the outlook of the children of a larger growth towards the mountain on their Grasmere horizon belong to the same sacred mood, in which the poetic mind, resting in the loved known, finds deepest rest in the still more beloved unknown.

The poet, in his old age (1833), based a series of moderately interesting *Evening Voluntaries* on lines which he composed between Moresby and Whitehaven—lines forming the last stanza of the piece entitled, *On a High Part of the Coast of Cumberland.*

Listening to the unseen sea-swell sounding benignly on a tranquil day, Wordsworth invokes the Creator who, to rebuke offenders, can clothe Himself in terrors like the ocean in its fiercest mood, to teach the quick-eared spirit how to rejoice in the softer admonitions of nature, that so the soul, withdrawn from such wisdom as begins in fear, may expand for a season free from care, and rest absorbed in the Deity. Moresby Road (an old Roman way) would be the most natural line of access to Whitehaven from Cockermouth, in the time of the Wordsworth children; and in the Fenwick note attached to the poem we are considering, the poet tells us, "With this coast I have been familiar from my earliest childhood; and I remember being struck for the first time by the town and port of Whitehaven, and the white waves breaking against its quays and piers, as the whole came into view from the top of the high ground down which the road (it has since been altered) then descended abruptly. My sister, when she first heard the voice of the sea from this point, and beheld the scene before her, burst into tears. Our family then lived at Cockermouth, and this fact was often mentioned among us as indicating the sensibility for which she was so remarkable."

The prospect from Distington indicated by Wordsworth is now so sadly obfuscated by the smoke of Lord Lonsdale's coalpits that Mr. Tucker has drawn Whitehaven and its coast from a neighbouring point, the Roman Camp of Arbeia, part of which has been enclosed for the church and churchyard of Moresby, where the poet's son John, as vicar, often entertained his parent. But it is neither of the Roman nor of the Celt that these shores give forth memory most

tenderly. Nor yet is reminiscence keenest about the charm of Moresby Hall, three hundred yards away from the Roman Camp—a hall of many legends, a hall where hospitalities were so regal, and princely personages congregated in such numbers, that to this day the Cumberland man, looking over a good whist hand of picture cards, will tell himself, as he will tell his companions afterwards, that luck brought him "a' the Moresby Ha' folk." It is the ubiquitous Danes who, in their speech, chiefly impressed themselves on this part of England, dotted as it is with their village-names ending in "by." When the Danes melted away like the pavement of Arbeia, something of the breath of their life remained. Their successors felt these Northmen with them so much, that they passed them into the category of superior denizens of the invisible world, lingering spiritually about their homesteads that smiled across the seas to Mona. Still, among these uplands and the sterner hills, the farmers fancy at evening that they can discern a harper's music, and melancholy songs sung in a sweet foreign tongue; and it is thought that the very cattle prick their ears with surprised love at hearing "the Danish Boy, sadly singing the old Bardic lays over the barrows of his once mighty forefathers." The group of *Evening Voluntaries* will always be associated with Moresby, the place of their birth; but that country-side speaks most winningly to us through Wordsworth's *Danish Boy*.

The town of Whitehaven, as known to the Wordsworths, was practically in all the pride of new creation. Camden makes no mention of Whitehaven, though it figures in Saxton's sea-maps. About a hundred years

before Wordsworth's time, there were here only three houses—Sir John Lowther's and two others—and three wherries. In forty years, the number of houses had increased to twenty. At the time when Dorothy first saw it, Whitehaven was a town of twelve thousand inhabitants, possessing elegant streets of stone-built houses, and one hundred and ninety large ships, mostly engaged in the coal trade with Ireland and the West Indian trade and the Virginian tobacco trade, and the African slave trade! Tangier House and Tangier Street still hold their own, in the centre of the town. Twenty thousand hogsheads of Virginian tobacco were annually imported here, till Glasgow stole the business. Why the port got the name of Whitehaven is not clear. The houses are mostly of material quarried from the red sandstone cliffs. Some explain the name as being originally Thwaitehaven, the "Port of the Clearing." Mr. William Jackson insists that the ancient name was Whitofthaven, the "Port of the White Toft" (knoll); and he would have us believe that the early houses were built of stone of lightest red taken from Tom Herd's Rock. Tom Herd's Rock still exists, of course, and never ceases from its blush. Possibly the place simply derived its exquisite appellation—why never copied?—from the fact that it was a welcome port on a treacherous shore of far-spread sands, which caused almost eternal breakers at the harbour-opening.

It is more significant than strange that Wordsworth makes no mention of an exploit famous in the annals not only of Whitehaven, but of all England and America. It happened in 1778, when William was eight, and Dorothy, seven. Paul Jones, born

WHITEHAVEN PIER AND ST. BEE'S HEAD, FROM MORESBY

at Kirkcudbright in Scotland, bred to the sea in a Whitehaven slaver, became commander of the American frigate *Ranger*. On April 23, 1778, the *Ranger* appeared, from France, outside Whitehaven. Jones landed with a few men in two boats, spiked the harbour guns, surprised the slumbering guard, and ordered the three hundred ships then in the harbour to be set on fire. Through mere bungling on the part of his subordinates, this order from the leader was not carried out; the moment of panic passed: Paul Jones had to take to his boats, and he escaped with difficulty.

Fletcher Christian, a Cumbrian, was educated at Cockermouth Grammar School during, or just about, the period of William Wordsworth's attendance. Christian ran a career which began its adventures in a Whitehaven discovery ship. It was he who led the mutiny of the *Bounty*, and founded the settlement on Pitcairn Island.

Not a word have we to show that William and Dorothy were moved with any admiration for the devil's-daring of such characters. But at Cockermouth the family often mentioned Dorothy's crying over the sea, as indicating "the sensibility for which she was so remarkable." Yes, Dorothy ends an exquisite life in painful exhaustion of all the senses. We know not how much of that exhaustion is to be laid to the charge of Nature, with its innumerable calls on the fine passions of such a being, and how much is to be laid to the charge of Wordsworth himself, who used freely, while he loved as freely, the dower of divination which gave this woman—one of England's darlings—her station in our literature. Dorothy was a poet. In a measure, William, her brother, is her poetry.

CHAPTER IV

PENRITH BEACON, SENTINEL OF THE FOREST

The old folk at Penrith, grandfather William Cookson and grandmother Dorothy, took to their austere home, during most of 1776 and 1777, both William and Dorothy Wordsworth. William had not prospered in what Mr. Gillbanks would have considered learning: perhaps that was the reason for the change. But this is not likely, since the children, reaching Penrith, were only sent to a dame's school kept by Ann Birkett. Vain are all searches after Dame Birkett and her seminary. An impression seems to linger that the school was in a group of buildings of which one fragment still exists, the Elizabethan house figured opposite. The registers say Ann was buried in Penrith on November 5, 1790, aged eighty-five. "The Dame did not affect to make theologians, or logicians, but she taught to read, and she practised the memory, often no doubt by rote; but still the faculty was improved. Something, perhaps, she explained, and left the rest to parents, to masters, and to the pastor of the parish." Such is Wordsworth's account of his second teacher. His third teacher was his own father, who at intervals prescribed to him the learning by heart of long passages from the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser—an act which gives us more clue to his nature than anything else in the scanty record about him. The fourth teacher was Penrith Beacon, with

OLD HOUSE, PENRITH

(Faint tradition says, Dame Birkett's School)

its world of story lying all round it. The real order of influence in 1776–1777 was Penrith Beacon's lessons on history; John Wordsworth's lessons on literature; Dame Birkett's lessons in spelling.

One sometimes suspects that William was sent to Penrith to be out of mischief; and we may suppose Dorothy to have accompanied him as a comfort and a check; but if this was the plan, it worked only moderately well. The headstrong moods still came to the child with terrific force. One day he slashed the family portraits with a whip till he broke through a canvas, in sheer wantonness. Again, in his grandfather's house, something displeasing him, he withdrew to an attic, purposing to take his life. To this end he had actually seized a foil, he tells us; but calmer thought prevailed. He returned to Dame Birkett's "murmuring cave," in the company of Dorothy and a little girl, just about his own age, who was to become his wife: Mary Hutchinson.

Every Penrith boy looks upon the Beacon as the town's glory and his own chief inheritance, the offset against school drudgery. At evening times, the Beacon is alive with scores of people; on summer Saturdays and Sundays, hundreds of children frequent it. It is near to the town; is easy of ascent; affords wonderful prospects; and it has no walk to rival it, for idle folk or merry-makers.

The first occasion on which we may watch William Wordsworth on the side of the Beacon is a tragic one, which has only lately been traced to this locality. Knight's surmise that the affair took place "either amongst the Lorton Fells or the north-western slopes of Skiddaw" must give way to an identification of

the spot lately established by the poet's grandson, Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, who obligingly allows mention of his discovery to be made here.

In 1766 a roadside inn at Carleton, scarcely a mile from Penrith, was one evening visited by a Langwathby butcher named Thomas Parker, who became so overcome with drink that the landlord recommended him to sleep. However, he preferred to stumble homewards in the dark, and the morning displayed him murdered and robbed, lying near the Cowrake quarry on the Edenhall side of the Beacon. Circumstantial evidence about this crime condemned a man called Thomas Nicholson, and when the deed was brought home to him in every detail by the confession of an accomplice, Nicholson was hanged at Carlisle by order of the Assize Court, and then suspended in chains near this Cowrake quarry. On the turf beside the gibbet some one carved the initials T. P. M. (Thomas Parker murdered). The deeply-cut letters long survived the gibbet, which fell one stormy night when a labourer was passing. The labourer, during a flash of lightning, perceived the prone skeleton, and took to his heels. He fancied he heard a noise pursuing him, and still faster flew he, the noise also increasing, until, exhausted, he realised that the rain had damped his corduroy breeches, and the motion of his knees made them screech as corduroy breeches sometimes do. This incident of the labourer is only a wisp of hearsay gleaned in Penrith. What is better authenticated as history is the advent of women from Edenhall, when the gibbet fell, with a winnowing-sheet in which they shrouded the murderer's bones—and then they carried them to burial.

How thin man's history sometimes appears, to the investigator—frail and thin as a sheet of tissue paper! Enquiry has been addressed in vain to the Carlisle Clerk of the Peace, the Clerks of Assize for Preston and York, and the Keeper of the London Record Office, for reports of the trial connected with this story. The court records and judgment—probably with hundreds of contemporary cases and decisions—have been lost or destroyed. Walker's *History of Penrith* recounts the tale pretty fully. In the British Museum this semi-official summary comes to light:

Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser (Thursday, 2nd September 1767).

"On Tuesday last the Assizes ended at Carlisle, when Thomas Nicholson was found guilty of the murder of Thomas Parker, a butcher, and was to be hanged last Monday (Aug. 31st) and afterwards hung in chains near Penrith, where the murder was committed."

Now the twelfth book of the *Prelude* (208) describes how the boy Wordsworth, at an age when he could hardly hold a bridle properly, set out to ride up "the hills," guided and encouraged by "an ancient servant of his father's house." No one who has studied Wordsworth's methods in description will find difficulty in believing that, if metre had not demanded "father" here, "grandfather" would probably have been the word employed to suit the facts: though "father" still will serve. As the boy and the old servant lost each other for a little on the hillside, the inexperienced young rider dismounted, and when he was leading his beast down the valley he came to a bottom where a murderer had formerly been hanged in chains. The gibbet mast had mouldered, and the bones and their iron casing had gone; but

hard by, on the turf, an unknown hand had carved the murderer's name. [As a matter of fact, the initials were not the criminal's—they were his victim's: but Wordsworth tells the incident neither very accurately nor very clearly; he does not state what must have been the case, that the initials brought before his child-mind a story with which he was already familiar.] Faltering and faint, the boy, thoroughly out of his bearings, began climbing again the "bare common" [the Beacon was devoid of trees, and was common land; in 1820 it was annexed by the Earl of Lonsdale]. By and by he recognised a tarn, with the Beacon above it, and, nearer at hand, a girl carrying on her head a pitcher, and forcing her way with difficult steps against the gale that was blowing. After all, it was an ordinary sight, yet the poet tells us he would need colours and words unknown to man, to paint the visionary dreariness of the pool, and the moorland waste on which his guide had disappeared, and the young woman with her garments vexed by the stormy wind.

The references to this passage in the *Prelude* must be completed. The poet goes on to describe later feelings haunting him on the same hill. Naturally misled by his guess that the scene of the murder lay at Lorton or Skiddaw, Professor Knight understands the sequel, now to be explained, as denoting wanderings with Dorothy. It is really Mary Hutchinson who is indicated. William Wordsworth tells us that "in the blessed hours of early love" when he had "the loved one at his side," he daily roamed over that same scene, visiting the "naked tarn and the dreary crags and the melancholy Beacon," and lo! over all had

fallen "a spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam." Here we must be grateful to Mr. Gordon Wordsworth for pointing out that these precise words—"a spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam"—are again used in the two hundred and thirty-sixth line of the sixth book of the *Prelude*, where Mary is clearly outlined. Proceeding, in the twelfth book, Wordsworth moralises these Beacon incidents to show how feeling comes to the aid of feeling, and diversity of strength is given us, if we have faculty to apprehend strength. In simple childhood a man can see the base of his truest greatness to stand. Greatness must come from within the self; one must have power to give, in order to receive. He adds:

> "The days gone by
> Return upon me almost from the dawn
> Of life: the hiding-places of man's power
> Open; I would approach them, but they close.
> I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
> May scarcely see at all." (277)

What, exactly, does the poet mean? Are we wrong—probably not!—in surmising that this earliest Beacon experience of terror in association with loathed murder gave him a power to cast out of himself, as beneath the truest dignity of a human soul, interest in bloody crime? Have we here noted an elemental revulsion in the child against what lay all round the Beacon—the record of rapine, partially consecrated though it had become by a rough valour wrapped in romance? Sir Walter Scott would have always found delight, and delight alone, in gazing from the Beacon. To Wordsworth there had come some shock of being that forced him, the boy, even when he climbed its slopes, to regard this summit, surrounded by all the lore of

Inglewood, as "the melancholy Beacon." The position of interpretation taken up here must be admitted to be assailable. One must remember always the warning of a great French chemist as to the principles of scientific investigation: "Unless we are very careful indeed, we shall find that for which we are looking." Still, Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, in localising an interesting description, has lighted up an important point in his grandfather's poetic development. If the student be not fully disposed to agree with the present writer's gloss upon the incident, let him re-read the twelfth book of the *Prelude*, and say if this passage in the poem does not mark a "fundamental" of some such quality as conjecture has here attempted to indicate.

It was never to Mary Hutchinson—no, nor even to Dorothy, that Wordsworth's deepest pledge of love was given. His virgin spirit had been already, at Cockermouth, irrevocably devoted to virgin Nature. The Beacon did not belong to virgin Nature. It stood for only human passions; for fear, in a land of ferocious cunning. We cannot, of course, discern the various tricklings of almost unconscious impression that come out of a child's life into a man's convictions. It is not contended that in the experience of the child Wordsworth there was ever a clearly conscious repudiation of all for which the Beacon stands in our national story. The most potent moods and divinations in a boy, framing the man, are the unconscious or barely-conscious. Wordsworth himself firmly believed in this elemental framing of the man—as who, indeed, has not learnt to believe? With the hope that a subsequent chapter of this book will amplify and vindicate such a theory, the surmise is here propounded that

all expressions of Wordsworth, at any age, which can be traced to the Beacon are implicitly a repudiation of blind war, forays, and revenges, the grinding sway of feudalism, monarchy upheld at the cost of labourers' serfdom. Take from the *Poems* four outstanding examples to bear out this hypothesis:

First. *Suggested by a View from an Eminence in Inglewood Forest.* The Fenwick Note tells us expressly that this sonnet in *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems* is written about the Penrith Beacon, and that the tree mentioned in it is the "Round Thorn," still standing at Penrith to-day, gnarled and swart amid a rush of tall young larches. The poem recounts how—

> "The forest huge of ancient Caledon
> Is but a name, no more is Inglewood,
> That swept from hill to hill, from flood to flood:
> On her last thorn the nightly moon has shone;
> Yet still, though unappropriate Wild be none,
> Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell might deign
> With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive again,
> To kill for merry feast their venison.
> Nor wants the holy Abbot's gliding Shade
> His church with monumental wreck bestrown;
> The feudal Warrior-chief, a Ghost unlaid,
> Hath still his castle, though a skeleton,
> That he may watch by night, and lessons con
> *Of power that perishes and rights that fade.*

Second. *Prelude* (iii. 113):

> "I called on both [earth and sky] to teach me what they might;
> Or turning the mind in upon herself,
> Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts
> And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
> Incumbencies more awful, visitings

Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time. . . . .
I had a world about me—'twas my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me,
And to the God who sees into the heart. . . . .
It was no madness, for the bodily eye
Amid my strongest workings evermore
Was searching out the lines of difference
As they lie hid in all external forms,
Near or remote, minute or vast; an eye
Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered leaf,
To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
Could find no surface where its power might sleep;
Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
And by an unrelenting agency
Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

And here, O Friend! have I retraced my life
Up to an eminence, and told a tale
Of matters which not falsely may be called
The glory of my youth. . . . .
This is, in truth, heroic argument,
This genuine prowess . . . .
Points have we all of us within our souls
Where all stand single;
. . . . there's not a man
That lives who hath not known his godlike hours,
And feels not what an empire we inherit
As natural beings in the strength of Nature.

No more: *for now into a populous plain*
We must descend."

Third. *Descriptive Sketches* (628). The young revolutionary Wordsworth of 1791–92 stands by the banks of the Loiret, in France, and speaks in language that seems as much tinged with English hopes as with sympathy for France—

"Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard;

Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams
Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
With more majestic course the water rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.
—But foes are gathering—*Liberty must raise*
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower!—
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour!
Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire:
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth!
—All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;
She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due."

Fourth. *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.* This poem opens in such a manner as to answer those who will argue that Wordsworth was devoid of power to apprehend any form of the romantic. He apprehends—and puts aside. The lilt of old chivalry and the very Scott-gallop are there, in the long stretch of rhymed octosyllabics furnishing most of the poem, descriptive of the feudal baron coming to his own, and feasting the followers who expect him to lead them to a still finer entertainment, revenge upon their foes. Then the poem, after a few lines rushing in still more straightened metre like a turbulent Highland torrent entering a deep, cool rock-cistern, proceeds in pentameters of alternate rhyme to tell us of the fresh ideas about

life that reached Henry, Lord Clifford, on the slopes of Threlkeld, when he roamed there, a shepherd lad:

> "Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills.
>
> "In him the savage virtue of the Race,
> Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
> Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
> The wisdom which adversity had bred."

This is the key poem of Wordsworth's being, in earliest ripening of feeling, and in full maturity of thought. At Cockermouth the child learnt a supernal wisdom from purest nature, that made feudal man and feudal beacons and feudal castles things more to sigh about than to sing. Wordsworth had been schooled, like the shepherd lord, to go in humble walks, with feelings that were being tamed and soothed.

> "When evil men are strong,
> No life is good, no pleasure long."

Such was the survey of existence in young Wordsworth's moments of relaxed power. But the highest Wordsworth finds escape from the doctrine; for Clifford, in an age of despotism, had acquired amid the hills and streams the secret that conveyed, to the minstrel who was to sing him, the serenest sanity. So had the child Wordsworth turned from Cockermouth Castle as "a shattered monument of feudal sway," to love fresh Derwent and the step of statesmen in the free streets of Cockermouth. So do we

find the Beacon of Penrith abandoned for lonelier heights where had sat Freedom from of old.

The Penrith church registers, under the shadow of the Beacon, begin in 1556. Their first parchment leaf is inscribed by "William Walliss, vicarius quondam," with "Proper Nots" (things Penrith people should ever remember thankfully); and the introductory "Not" is—"Flodden Field was in Anno Dom. 1513." How this would have made Scott's eyes glisten! Wordsworth would probably have turned the page, and made no sign.

Condescend to study our poet in a map of Lakeland. A few moments will enable us to construct from this a catalogue of what lay around the boy at Penrith; glorious hills, the names of which, for all their music, were first breathed by savages; the camps that served the Romans who conquered and contemned these savages; the duelling-grounds of Danes; the frowning fortresses of Norman robber-chiefs; even the Tudor farms armed and battlemented, to defend flocks and herds and the honour of women. The whole domain of Inglewood—the whole circle of Northern Romance in England—lies around the boy-poet's feet. But, achingly redolent of valour though that land of ballad-stuff be, it is tainted. The scarce-conscious soul of child-Wordsworth repudiates his inheritance. See, through this ruined Norman window of Brougham Castle, yonder unknown land! It is unsung hitherto. It is spoken of by the general world as a region where beauty walks always in a robe of terror. This—a virgin land, a land with no feudal castles in it, claiming scant history, that little, however, the chronicle of men free as the streams they live beside—this is the land

he will sing, this is the land in which he will work out his consecration and his poet's dream. Not in vain had the wisdom and spirit of the universe from the dawn of his childhood intertwined for Wordsworth the passions that build up the human soul. That wisdom turned him from "the mean and vulgar works of man to high objects and *enduring things*," to life and nature in their elemental purity.

They who learn, with Rousseau, to walk on their heels backwards in search of Nature will weary of the journey, though not for the first mile, mayhap. They who walk forward with Wordsworth will securely pace their own world, in the light of their own day. Wordsworth found a way of escape, for himself and for us, a way of sanity, in which chronicles of man's bickerings assume character less important, when we are occupied in trying to catch, for humanity, the perennial cheer of cloud and stream and wind, a visual language. Wordsworth is the prose of Berkeley and Fichte carried on into poesy.

Well, some of us feel that we can never fully express our gratitude to Wordsworth for the teaching that followed upon his *gran rifiuto*. And this may still be our reverent feeling, although we have moods in which we value *Kinmont Willie* more than whole volumes of reflective verse, and would rather have blown that single trumpet blast, when all was ready for Willie's release by escalade at Carlisle Castle, in the grey dawn, than uttered the best sonnet of the English tongue.

But how came Wordsworth to choose the valley of Threlkeld as the particular part of England from which he would teach his lesson of calm? An answer

THE VALE OF KESWICK

is found in the fact that Threlkeld lies midway between Cockermouth and Penrith, and on the direct road from the former town to the latter. Boy and man, Wordsworth rode or trudged scores of times along that overshadowed horse-track. The valley happily maintains, even yet, its pristine simplicity. True, a railway line runs side by side with the river Glenderamakin, but it seems to carry all the world from Penrith past Threlkeld to Keswick or from Keswick to Penrith. No "fine houses" have sprung up in Threlkeld valley, still a region of leisurely shepherds and their like, Blencathara spreading its magnificent bat's-wings over it on the north, while the south side is guarded by the considerable mass of Clough Head, and by Mell Fell—a kind of joke in nature as a round contrast to angular Blencathara. It is to be noticed that where a single mountain detaches itself in this district, the atmospheric effects playing upon it become doubly impressive. Skiddaw as seen from Bassenthwaite and Blencathara rearing itself over Threlkeld are not to be surpassed for atmospheric glamour by any mountains in Lakeland. Sometimes one or other of these kingly hills will withdraw itself into a vaporous gathering that is not ordinary haze or mist, still less rain, but, as it were, a bloom of dews, amethystine, volatile, as soft as quick in motions of embracement; and lo! the hill grows weightier, more insistent, in its own dumb patience, a dim towering God of fate, aloof, but withal benedictive in its massive majesty, breathing the nobilities of silence—we might imagine—through a veil made up of all the tears of all the women who have found love for child or man inexpressible by words.

The north-eastern end of Threlkeld valley melts openly as a plain into Inglewood and the great caravan route from Scotland to the southern world (see Dales Map, p. 220). Clifford, in his time, could look east with level eyes to that horizon just beneath which lay his inheritance. But to the south-west, at the other end, the shepherd lord would gaze, it is like, with alien feeling: there lay the land of which the lonely witcheries were uncanny, the inhabitants supposed barbarous, a land over which blew more than half the storms that "fleeced the shuddering ground" in Threlkeld's wintry deeps. And still the *genius loci*, under the silence of the starry sky, was prevailing to teach trust in all Nature and therefore in natural Man. We see that in his customary travels between father's home and grandfather's home, Wordsworth was given abundant opportunity for brooding speculations, differing wholly in character as he faced up the valley towards the roaring towns or loitered downwards through it towards the silences that lay among these unsung hills, hills a-slumber in neglect, countless echoes unwaked save by sheep-flocks and the raven. The story of Clifford would grow into the boy-Wordsworth's mind with the force of a *Pilgrim's Progress*. Stand to-day in the middle of Threlkeld valley. In character, in feeling, does it draw towards the world beginning at Penrith, or does it cling to the westering belt of still mountains? Every field, every cottage partakes of the appealing pastoral sincerity of the west. The dale's choice has long been made and fixed, if a dale may be deemed to have any expression in its countenance. Wordsworth's choice coincided with the feeling we find in Threlkeld valley.

THRELKELD HALL AND BLENCATHARA

(Scene of "Shepherd Lord's" early life)

CHAPTER V

BROUGHAM CASTLE, CITADEL OF THE FOREST

How could Dorothy Wordsworth endure the bull-baitings at Dockray and Sandgate? What, perched in his grandfather's north gallery seat in church, of a Sunday morning, thought William when the psalm became drowned—as sometimes actually happened—by acclamations issuing from the adjacent cock-pit?

It was a rough world, Penrith, for spirits like these. The children have little to tell us about it. Of Grandfather Cookson, hardly a word. Since June 27, 1760, Grandfather Wordsworth had been lying in his grave in Barton Church chancel. The roof and the walls of the church were open to the elements, and a hare was killed by the hunt one day at this very grave. Although Christopher Wordsworth informs us that the family of the poet's paternal grandfather helped the youth in his poetical education, neither the biographer nor anybody else has satisfied our curiosity as to the quality of the encouragement vouchsafed. Mrs. Dorothy Crackanthorpe Cookson had the carpet laid in the drawing-room only "on particular occasions." One is dubious about the lady. This, perhaps, was the Crackanthorpe side of her. Yet she learned to be a Cookson, and "sat in the shop in the afternoons," says Dorothy. "I had become perverse and obstinate in defying punishment, and rather proud of it than otherwise." Such

is Wordsworth's record of himself, and he further declares that "this state of mind resulted, possibly, from some want of judgment in punishments inflicted." About the grandmother, Dorothy Crackanthorpe, little but stony silence from both orphans. There are moments when our fancy can detect more than an unreasoned burst of child petulance in the whipping of the family portraits ranged in the drawing-room above the shop. We may take it that William —Dorothy by his side to share—had life nearly all his own way at Cockermouth; but at Penrith that visionary gleam somewhat faded.

A mile distant from Penrith, just beside the Roman fort on the blue Eamont River, stands the castle of Brougham. This castle would be an inevitable haunt of the young brother and sister, a place for brooding in, no doubt more truly their Penrith school of dreams than either the mercery or Dame Birkett's academy for infants. Of all the views of Brougham, probably the best glimpse one gets of it is from the highroad. It shows the fortress in seeming humility casting its ruined features into the reflecting pool of the stream, sinking back in a kind of sombre sadness of battered stone into the dusk of the trees that compass it with a shelter felt to be needed—the peak of Warcop Fell rising above it five miles away, and beyond the Fell, on the immediate right, bright uplands and the gorge that opens past the cousin-castles of Brough and Pendragon (both within Westmorland) to Skipton Castle in Yorkshire.

We saw, in a former chapter, that Brougham is said to owe its foundation to William Rufus. About

BROUGHAM CASTLE

1238 the Prior of Carlisle was entrusted with the tutorship of Robert de Veteripont, Lord of Brougham. The prior made an inventory of the place, and he records that "the walls and roofs are gone to decay, for want of repairing the gutters." We are apt to lose the fact that every age has had ruins to amuse it. Veteripont's castle, inventoried as desolate, was so left, until Roger de Clifford, son-in-law of Robert de Veteripont, repaired and extended it, and placed over one of its doors a stone engraved with these ambiguous words: "Thys made Roger." Read the inscription backwards or forwards, as you please.

In 1333, Balliol, King of Scotland, was the guest of Robert, Lord Clifford, in Brougham Castle, with a single greyhound as companion. Balliol once outdistanced the royal hunt in chase of a stag; and after a long run, and an astounding leap over a high wall, the stag fell dead, having led the Scottish monarch a course that at one point of the circle came near the border of his kingdom. The quarry sank in Whinfell Park, not far from Penrith. The hound attempted the same leap, but fell back discomfited, and died also. To a tree in the park the antlers of this champion stag of Inglewood were nailed by Balliol's command, and there they remained until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The incident is commemorated in Wordsworth's poem, *Hart's Horn Tree.*

This Lord Robert was what the Norse called "a straw man." He died in his bed. He was succeeded by his eldest son, a Robert also, who fought at Cressy and fell in the French wars, aged thirty-two. Thirty-

two, in such furious times, was quite a fair age for a nobleman to attain.

After the Cliffords had intermarried with the Percies, there was a young Lord Clifford who captured the French town of Pontoise one snowy night, by clothing himself and his men in white and so surprising the garrison. It was his son John who achieved notoriety by revengefully killing the stripling Earl of Rutland. To the youth, begging for mercy in the battle of Wakefield, Clifford exclaimed —and he himself was barely twenty-five years old— "Thy father slew mine, and I will slay thee." So he stabbed him. The murderer was killed three months later by his enemies of York, who overthrew the Lancastrians at the fight of Dintingale which ushered in the battle of Towton Field.

With her two boys, the widow of Lord Clifford was attainted. All three had to hide from their relentless enemies, the mother and her younger son escaping to the Low Countries, and leaving Henry, the elder son, to be brought up as a shepherd by Sir Lancelot Threlkeld of Threlkeld and Yanwath Hall. Sir Lancelot uttered a naïve saying that is not without its bearing on Wordsworth's feeling against these times: "I have three noble houses—one, for pleasure, Crosby in Westmorland, where I have a park full of deer; one for profit and warmth, wherein to reside during winter, namely, Yanwath, near Penrith; and the third, Threlkeld, well stocked with tenants to go with me to the wars." Ere long, Sir Lancelot became the second husband of Lady Clifford. Blencathara and Carrock, overshadowing Threlkeld, were for years the pastoral pleasance of the boy. But even here,

albeit he was ignorant of his noble birth, Henry Clifford was not safe, since his chief foe by race, the Duke of Gloucester, held court at Penrith Castle, and instituted such inquisitions that Henry was conveyed by his guardian to the Scottish Border. There, although unable to read or write, the youth became something of an astrologer, even an astronomer. After the shepherd had passed twenty years of his life in happy obscurity, Henry VII. gave him his rightful titles, honours, and estates. The shepherd lord learned to read; and once he fought bravely for his country—at Flodden. Wordsworth makes no mention of the fighting at Flodden in any connection with the *Feast*, though later he admits it in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. Henry rebuilt several of his castles: Pendragon, for instance, and Brough, and Brougham. Barden Tower he restored, to be his real home, where astronomical instruments became his weapons. He was altogether a plain man, shunning the London Court as much as he dared, yet figuring there on stress of occasion wisely and like a good English gentleman. Henry Clifford was twice married, and died in 1523, aged seventy. *The Nut Brown Maid* in Percy's *Reliques* is a ballad which many regard as recounting the love affair of Henry with the maiden who became his first wife, Ann, daughter of Sir John St. John of Bletsoe.

The successor of this shepherd lord—Henry by name likewise—died at Brougham Castle after enjoying his honours and estates during forty-seven years. This Henry also was an astrologer, given to chemistry moreover, "a great distiller of waters, and very studious in all manner of learning: he had an

excellent library of books both hand-written and printed."

Yes, the times were passing when only iron in the blood made "a man." There came, in Elizabeth's reign, a George, Earl of Cumberland, master of Brougham Castle, who was a mathematician, and his tastes led him from pure mathematics to scientific navigation, and thence to the seafaring life. At his own cost he built ships for Elizabeth's service, selling part of his estates to furnish the ships with sailors. Here is an extract from a manuscript, preserved at Skipton Castle, describing this Earl's "Voyage to India":—

"*November* 5.—Our men went on Shor and fet rys abord, and burnt the rest of the houses in the negers towne; and our bot went downe to the outermoste pointe of the ryver, and burnt a towne, and brout away all the rys that was in the towne. The 6th day we servyd God, being Sunday."

The Earl performed eleven voyages, and commanded that *Bonaventure* which fought against the Spanish Armada. Handsome, as extravagant in pleasure as he was generous in ships, he was a delight to his Queen, who appointed him her official champion at the Court jousts. You can see his tourney suit to-day, at Appleby. It is inlaid with gold. Lord Henry usually wore in his hat a glove which he won as a favour from Elizabeth, and which he had caused to be incrusted with jewels.

This *grand seignieur* was a voluptuary, a bad husband, and a sorry father to that Anne Clifford of renown greater than his own, who, at sixteen, married Richard Sackville, Earl of Dorset. Anne had trouble with this avaricious husband, for his demands upon her private purse were encouraged, though vainly,

by James I. Twice the lady was haled before the King; twice she held her own. Returning from a visit to her saintly mother at Brougham Castle, the Countess of Dorset bade adieu to her parent—as it proved, for ever—on the Appleby road, in the year and in the month when Shakespeare died, April, 1616. The Countess afterward erected on the spot a memorial pillar. The stone still exists, with a "done-up" metal inscription, and hideous decoration in yellow and blue paint. The original inscription ran thus, as Wordsworth gives it in a note to his poem on the subject:

"This pillar was erected, in the year 1658, by Anne Countess Dowager of Pembroke, for a memorial of her last parting with her pious mother, Margaret Countess Dowager of Cumberland, on the 2nd of April 1616; in memory whereof she hath left an annuity of £4 to be distributed to the poor of the parish of Brougham, every 2nd day of April for ever, upon the stone table hard by. Laus Deo!"

This dole continues to our day, and gives occasion for a kind of popular fête. The Dole Table still, beside the pillar, happily holds its place, worn down to the likeness of a soft grey cushion, dignified by the contemptuous neglect of the Penrith house-painters. Mrs. Hemans, like Wordsworth, wrote verses about *The Countess Pillar*.

"The 5th day of October (1675) did I remove into my Castle at Brougham." So runs a line in the Countess's stately autobiography. Six months later, the Countess died in Brougham Castle, and she was buried in the tomb she had prepared for herself in Appleby Church.

The estate now devolving upon the Tuftons, in the person of Nicholas, Earl of Thanet, that family

dismantled Brougham Castle in 1720 and sold much of its materials. At the rebuilding of Penrith Church in this same year, the roof was largely constructed of beams that had covered the oft-and-sorely-tried castle of Brougham.

Our account of a single Inglewood castle may suffice to display the feudal material lying all round Penrith Beacon, fit for some kind of literary treatment. This material never caught at the heart of our poet. He is no Norman. We doubt if he be a Saxon, although the present form of his patronymic has a Saxon sound and appearance. What is he, in racial feeling? Surely, a strange and subtly-feeling compound: a Dane by blood-origin (the Crackanthorpes probably account for his ability, and they are of Danish descent), but a Dane nursed into unwonted imaginativeness by his cradle-music, the songs and sighings of the Cockermouth floods and fells breathing into his ear mysteries such as fed the Cymric spirit. "In England, to this day, the descendants of the Anglo-Danes in Cumberland and Yorkshire are taller and bonier than those of the Anglo-Saxons in Surrey and Sussex." So writes Lytton, in *Harold;* and Lytton also dwells upon the light eyes and light hair of the northern children as Scandinavian. The great poet of Cumberland bore every mark of a Dane; his hair was light and his eyes were blue; his stature was great and his frame and face were bony. He was by predominance of strain some sort of Scandinavian, probably. But daily to the child came an emanation, an exhalation of Nature as it had appealed to Celts of yore. "The murmurs of that fairest river [the

Derwent] had mingled its music with his nurse's song. From its shadowed alders and rocky falls, a voice issued that flowed along the boy's dreams, composing his thoughts to a softness beyond that of an ordinary child's, and giving him a dim earnest of the calm he was to find breathed by Nature through hills and groves. He thanked God that he and Derwent had both been nursed among the mountains within the floating shadow of eagles' wings—a freedom far prouder than that of any Nemæan victor dragging chained captives at his car." The reader will probably pardon this second borrowing of these words from the *Prelude.*

Now let this same reader turn to one of the poems reminiscent of youthful impressions, the Goslar poem to which reference has already been made — *The Danish Boy.* Who is the real "Danish Boy"? Mark this passage in the 1800 edition, dropped from all subsequent editions:

> "When near this blasted tree you pass,
> Two sods are plainly to be seen
> Close at its root, and each with grass
> Is cover'd fresh and green.
> Like turf upon a new-made grave,
> These two green sods together lie;
> Nor heat, nor cold, nor rain, nor wind
> Can these two sods together bind,
> Nor sun, nor earth, nor sky.
> But side by side, the two are laid,
> As if just sever'd by the spade."

Wordsworth says, "The poem was entirely fancy." It is here suggested that *The Danish Boy* be pondered once more after our Hawkshead chapters have been read, and again when this book's final page has been reached.

CHAPTER VI

HAWKSHEAD, IN FURNESS

It is not difficult for us to imagine the joy with which in 1778 the brother and sister left Penrith for the Cockermouth home, a home surrounded by such beauty—a very privacy of charm compared with the caravanserai upon the road from the north to London. Once more they could sink to sleep nightly with Derwent nigh to murmur their cradle songs, songs older than the lapsing river's liquid Celtic name, songs breathing "the ghostly language of the ancient earth." Once more the moody boy could "drink in the feelings of his Mother's eye." Abundantly Wordsworth's poetry testifies to the passion with which he loved that mother, to the spell her tranquil nature wove through his being. The poet gives us his remembrance of Mrs. Wordsworth in the *Prelude* (v. 256). She was lovable:

> "Not from faculties more strong
> Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,
> And spot in which she lived, and through a grace
> Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
> A heart that found benignity and hope,
> Being itself benign."

The second book of the *Prelude* tells us how from earliest days the child held mute dialogue with this mother's heart. To her watchful powers over him the poet attributes much of the subtle discriminative

intuition with which he so early grew to feel the manifold distinctions in things that are alike to the ordinary eye and ear.

Mrs. Wordsworth, on a visit to London, caught the worst of chills in a "best bed." Returning homewards very ill, she was constrained to break her journey at Penrith, and in her father's house she died. "March 11th, 1778: Mrs. Wordsworth, wife of John Wordsworth, Esq., of Cockermouth, aged 30, Buried." So runs the chronicle of the Penrith churchyard. That churchyard now gives no recognisable sign of Mrs. Wordsworth's burial-place. Christopher Wordsworth is content to describe her in a few words: "She was possessed of piety and wisdom." The only other friendly gleam shed upon the lady—apart from William's panegyric in poetry and a scarcely articulate sigh for her breathing through Dorothy's letters, is the remark of Sarah Hutchinson, that she never heard Mrs. Wordsworth mentioned save when, on returning from her funeral, Mrs. Hutchinson confessed her sense of loss, and sobbed.

In this same year, 1778, William was sent to Hawkshead in company with his younger brother, Christopher. Hawkshead, in Lancashire, midway between Windermere and the Lake of Coniston, is still an almost unsophisticated town of the true plan and character belonging to the fell-folk. The inhabitants of Hawkshead, about 1778, were small landowners, weavers, sheepbreeders, and shopkeepers. A newspaper was a curiosity among them, and so was a wheeled conveyance, no such carriage being known till 1792, in which year the novelty is noticed in the town records. Hawkshead is dominated by a church

—some say, once fortified—which stands high to the west of all the houses as if it had shaken them out of its lap. This church dates its foundations from 1160, the year when Furness Abbey was begun, the present walls seeming to belong to a period three hundred years later. A great amphitheatre stretches around it, an agricultural plateau bounded on the east by Claife Heights; on the south by Furness Fells—Morecambe Bay lying just a little beyond; on the west by Coniston Old Man and Brown Pike, the Cistercian Abbey of Furness farther off—south-west; on the north by the valley of Brathay River, with a far horizon of magnificent peaks, Scawfell, Bow Fell, Langdale Pikes, Rydal Fell, and Helvellyn.

At Cockermouth, the boy Wordsworth had been just on the verge of the Lake district, as—largely through the poet's own writing—we have come to define that area. The Derwent drew its sources from that enigmatical land awaiting its seer. The Derwent, near Cockermouth, becomes almost a champaign stream, and ere it flows past John Wordsworth's mansion it is compelled to mirror in its free-born flood the still grim though ghostly features of tyranny; Cockermouth Castle is an insistent ruin. The castle was not what most invitingly drew the fancy of the child. Cockermouth remained in the memory of him whose art was recollective, delicious because the steady seasons and pure elements here found a worthy fellow-labourer—Man, free now—Man, working for himself—his wants, occupations and cheerful cares "followed by an unsought train of simplicity and inevitable grace."

Penrith was outside the Lake district. Its very

HAWKSHEAD

("Priest's Pot" Pool in foreground; Weatherlam covered with snow)

rivers spent nearly all their strength within the ancient limits of Inglewood Forest. By these lovely placid waters the Penrith man, although he had become distinctly cheerful, yet in the process of history had acquired a somewhat flatfooted way of going about his conquered world.

At Hawkshead William Wordsworth was in every sense withdrawn from the teaching of these plains. The market centre of the great Norman settlement which sprang from Furness Abbey, Hawkshead —ancient township of some Norse Haak or Haakon —stood three hundred feet above the ocean, surveying a kind of country where mankind had never been really conquered by monarchs, and where the very soil and hills had never been conquered by mankind. From Cockermouth, on the north of the true land of promise, William Wordsworth now arrived at the high vantage ground on the south, as if to view that land long, ere going in to possess it. Some Berserker founded this town, and brought to the district the language and customs of the almost primitive folk we still meet in Furness—true Fell people, with broad shoulders, arched noses, strong jaws, grey eyes, manners of high courtesy. All round, stand those often-snowy hilltops with the Celtic names that seem to be breathed murmurously from them as soon as we look at the sky-tost crags, Glaramara, Rydal, Derwent, Helvellyn.

An Elizabethan gentleman projected something greater for Haak's town than anything of which Haak himself ever dreamt. This gentleman, born at Esthwaite Hall, was Edwin Sandys, who became Archbishop of York. By the Queen's Patent he

founded the Hawkshead Free Grammar School, "Perpetuis temporibus futuris duratura," endowed to provide for the sons of neighbours unpurchasable instruction in the elements of general knowledge and in Latin and in Greek. The schoolmaster and the usher were to teach "all such good authors which do contain precepts of virtue and good literature for the better education of youth, and shall once every week at least instruct and examine the scholars in the principles of true religion, to the end that they may the better know and fear God."

The property set apart for the endowment of this Free School consisted principally of lands in Yorkshire and Westmorland. The affairs of the establishment were regulated by governors selected from the neighbourhood, and sworn to their office as clean from all dealings, pecuniary or otherwise, designed to procure such an office. In Wordsworth's time, those who, like himself, did not belong to the district, were charged two guineas quarterly for admission to the otherwise free privileges of the school. Side by side with the boys of good birth, who procured board in one or other of the many dames' houses, ten Blue Coat Charity boys—strictly drawn from among the children of labourers—received the same chances of education. These children of the poor had their clothing paid for them—and board in a hostel, if it were required. There is happily no sign that much friction occurred between the Blue Coats and their social superiors. The guess may be hazarded that the boy who so skilfully imitated owls on Winander was a Blue Coat. We are told that he belonged to the Valley, and was eventually buried in the churchyard,

about the age of twelve. Wordsworth, it will be noticed, gives us a verb in one of his Hawkshead passages, that is almost his unconscious record of the double stream of social life in the school. The fifth book of the *Prelude* (398) says:

> "Even now appears before the mind's clear eye
> That self-same village church; I see her sit
> (The thronèd Lady whom erewhile we hailed)
> On her green hill, forgetful of this Boy
> Who slumbers at her feet,—forgetful, too,
> Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,
> And listening only to the gladsome sounds
> That, from the rural school ascending, play
> Beneath her and about her. May she long
> Behold a race of young ones like to those
> With whom I herded!"

Search has been made among the burial records in the hope of tracing the young native of the vale whose mimicry of the owls is still vocal above the grave where he "lies slumbering at the feet" of his parish church. The reader, if he be interested in such a speculative quest, may choose between these entries:

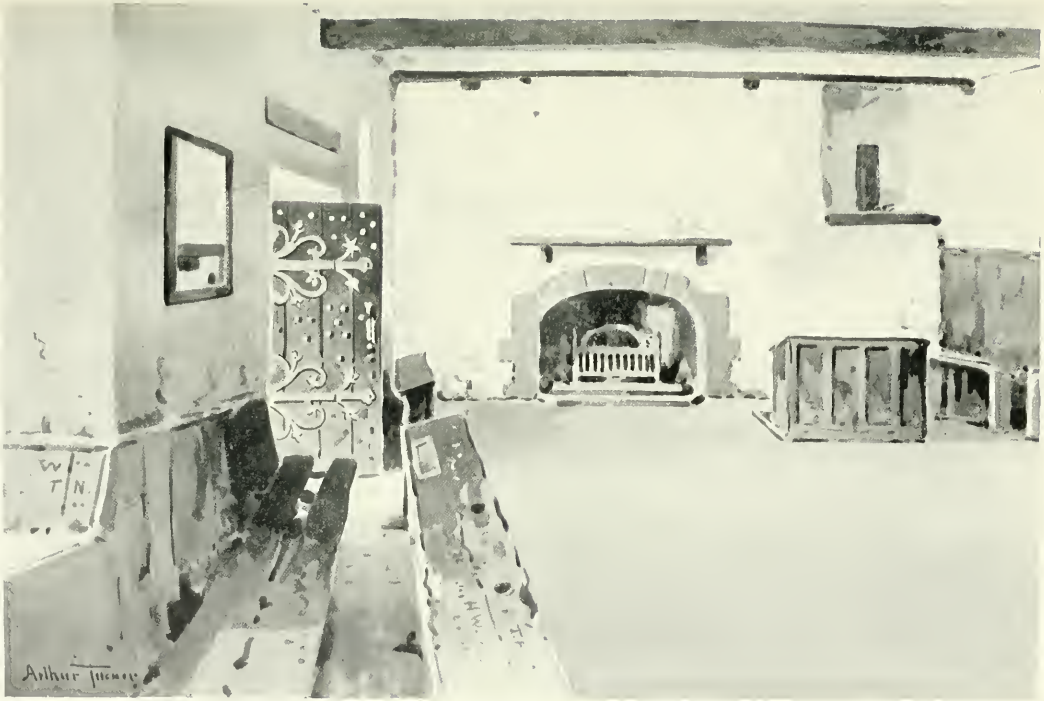
1779. George Graham Son of Mr. George Gibson, Atturney, Dyed June ye 26th. Buried ye 28th aged 12 in ye Churchyard. A Fevre.

1782. John Vickars a Charity Boy from Cragg died July ye 28th. Buried ye 30th in Ch-yard.

This Vickars seems rather the more likely to be the simple hero of *There was a Boy*. In the 1800 edition of that poem Wordsworth tells us the boy died at the age of ten; but in the 1815 edition the age is corrected to "twelve." If this was the true age, and Vickars was the boy, he was born in the same year as

William Wordsworth, and would likely be a classmate of his. Cragg was not part of Hawkshead village, but it was part of Hawkshead valley. Gibson would belong to the village, probably. As for William Raincock of Rayrigg, he may be traced from Hawkshead School to St. John's College, Cambridge, and certainly did not die at ten or twelve, and therefore Wordsworth's note prefixed to *There was a Boy* is not meant to indicate more than the fact that Raincock was superior in his art even to the immortalised Boy.

The schoolhouse, founded, as we have seen, in Elizabeth's reign (the year being 1585), was rebuilt in 1675 by Daniel Rawlinson, a Grisdale man who had achieved fortune in London. The sundial at the door is at least as old as Rawlinson's time. In 1891 Colonel Sandys, the present owner of Graythwaite, further restored the fabric with some freestone quoins; and he supported a public subscription by which was built opposite the school a useful, ugly, and officious-looking gymnasium, standing between the school and the sun. But what matters this now? Mr. Arthur Tucker and the writer, on the day they first visited Hawkshead together (each having been individually familiar with the spot for many years), saw "Ichabod" written up before their eyes. On this 9th day of May, 1910, they watched a flitting in process at the schoolmaster's house, the very house the attractive "Matthew" of the poem is supposed to have honoured as a wayward inhabitant of genius. Modern educational methods—how far are Government bureaucrats justified in trampling out institutions so dear to proud communities?—have taken the life from country Grammar



SCHOOLROOM, HAWKSHEAD

(Wordsworth's name cut on desk)

Schools like this. The Hawkshead School has been closed. The head master has been pensioned off. On this May Monday Matthew's airy home, abandoned by the last of the graduate-masters, was handed over to a farmer's widow from Coniston, who declared her intention of turning the building into a lodging-house. "Formerly," said a great-voiced yeoman, witness of this scene, "young men came to this school from many parts—there were usually even foreigners attending the famous school. In Wordsworth's time there would be a hundred pupils. Many of them came from other towns with scholarships to pay their board. Now the district has lost its school: the children have been deprived of their inheritance. If we have a clever boy or a favourite boy, we are told to give him a scholarship to a secondary school, and the nearest is the Kelsick School at Ambleside, six miles away. The best thing in Hawkshead, next to the Church of God, has been allowed to die."

It is ended, then, the school that trained the brains and fed the heart of William Wordsworth, the school amply endowed by an archbishop, lover of posterity, to carry out to perpetuity his great Queen's behest for the boys of his native region. Our wisdom has made the school an empty barrack and the masters' home a lodging-house.

It will be strange if America does not cry out upon England for suffering this to be.

CHAPTER VII

"WORDSWORTHIAN" THINKING BEFORE WORDSWORTH

"For other things," Emerson cried, "I make poetry of them; but the moral sentiment makes poetry of me." External nature made poetry out of Wordsworth, rather than suffered itself to be carved and burnished by him into poetry, in the pseudo-classical manner. When we are young, we think that beauty in the human countenance is feature. Growing older, we learn that it is expression. Atmospheric conditions are so peculiar in Westmorland and Cumberland and the borders of these counties that the hills in them seem always to be thinking: their supreme charm lies not in outline but in expression; or one may put it thus, their beauty is alive with a mysterious power to raise curiosity in the most reverent recesses of the human mind. If ever there was a land illustrative of visual language, it is this land. Hence our painters have nearly all retired from it defeated—or else, forewarned, have shunned it. Some one asked Sir Joshua Reynolds if he had ever tried to paint a blush. "Yes," he replied, "and I only produced redness." The steady power of these fitfully-lit hills to suggest wonder to all who have thoughtfully lived among them is, we may take it, what came to Wordsworth. He did not invent it. He

realised it—and in childhood, for it was as a boy that he drank in to the finest fibres of his heart impressions no more his absolute creation than the prismatic lights that come to an opened oyster-shell are the creation of the oyster. The record of Wordsworth's impressions is his poetry. The impressions sent forth are Nature's poetry. All that is deepest in Wordsworth's writings appeals to sensitive minds, not as creation that, however interesting, is individual and arbitrary, but as revelation of law, and even beauty as language of law, in the realms of nature external to man; law that is clearer to most minds, when a poet has given it human words; but law more eternal, more basic, than the whole mind of mankind; a law that must be faced, and harmonised with any theology to which we turn for soul-sustenance; a law as far transcending the idea that God cares only for what man thinks in His universe, as the inexhaustible power of suggestion in the wind transcends the compass of a sigh or a song. In a page of the Koran, we find Mahommed, on an unclouded Eastern night, looks up to the skies for a thought, and hears the Almighty whisper, "Thinkest thou that I made all these stars in jest?" We may carry the thought from the night into the day: Thinkest thou that God creates these countless combinations that we call loveliness only for the pleasure of casually percipient man? Is God to make no loveliness for Himself, or for created beings invisible to us, higher than we are, aye, or even for beings lower in certain attributes—loveliness that may have combinations, relations, permutations too subtle for us? Stand here and look across Windermere to Furness Fells. At your elbow a bee

murmurs in its chosen foxglove. The bee thinks the bell is for bees—and so it is; but for bees only? Is the bell just a factory or a food-shop? The bee, little recking how God uses it to fertilise the world with blossom of beauty, as little recks of its own exquisite suggestiveness to you, when you gaze across these Fells and remember how Wordsworth taught from them and Ruskin wrote in their shadow. The bee's notion of bells being made wholly for bees to interpret, is just as true and as false as the idea that the Creator fashions what we term beauty and poetical suggestion—visual language—only for human beings, and that beauty stops at the point where mankind ceases to perceive any beauty. The highest value of the bee to you is that, admirably clever as you must confess it, you realise that it flits through a world largely unrealised by it. The bee and you in your two degrees are alike in these flittings, limited through the limitless.

Holding our "Wordsworth way" of reaching towards the gospel of beauty, and holding that Wordsworth bowed down to Nature as a better poet than Man, we may go on to suggest that Hawkshead School realised this, perhaps but dimly, before Wordsworth was permitted to see its walls. The directors of the Hawkshead Grammar School were seemingly carrying out a system which gave Wordsworth eyes and ears hardly less than Dorothy did—developed in him powers of just discrimination and exquisite divination quite as cleverly as Dr. Bowyer at Christ's Hospital taught Coleridge how to recognise the highest when he met it. The Hawkshead School policy was this—Nature is the greatest Head Master; and the

RAYRIGG, WINDERMERE

best Usher to help Nature in educating man is the Universal in Literature. In a very amphitheatre of beauty, the masters of the Hawkshead School gave their boys the amplest opportunity of scouring heaven's free wilderness—the moors of Hawkshead and Yewdale, and the sands of Ulverston, and the lakes of Esthwaite and Windermere. No master or usher went with these bands of boys on their adventures. Certain wide bounds being assigned to them, the lads were put on their honour to behave as scholars and young gentlemen. The Rev. T. H. Baines, in whose company this theory—if it be worth such a name—was lately opened up by the writer, recalled that when his father, the Rev. H. T. Baines, was head master of this same school from 1860 to 1884, that was the policy he carried out, most likely from tradition. Out of school hours and on holidays he allowed the boys to wander free within these geographical limits: Skelwith Bridge to the north; Windermere to the east; Newby Bridge to the south; Coniston Lake to the west.

Two years ago the writer was browsing on books in a Windermere friend's library, when he chanced to take down from the shelf a slim volume entitled *The Minstrels of Winandermere*. Opening it, he found "W. Wordsworth" inscribed on the title-page. The house in which this discovery occurred is Rayrigg Hall, associated closely with much that was significant in the story of Westmorland, and once the home of John Fleming, our poet's schoolfellow. This book, besides the signature, bears only two markings from Wordsworth's pen, and these of no importance. Yet the volume, which was probably given by Wordsworth

to John Fleming in memory of old days, is occupied with descriptions of the Hawkshead schoolboys, their journeys, their pranks, and their songs. It consists of a series of poems bearing some traces, principally in the versification, of Burns's influence, but containing no allusion to Wordsworth, and exhibiting no sign that the author had either read or heard of Wordsworth. Who wrote this volume of verse that Wordsworth thought worth the possessing? Charles Farish, who graduated B.A. in 1788 and B.D. in 1799, at Cambridge, and became a Wrangler, and Fellow of Queens' College in that University. He had received his earlier education at Hawkshead Grammar School, in the flight of boys contemporaneous with Richard Wordsworth, and slightly overlapping the period of William. From Farish's introductory note we learn that his book appeared in the year 1811. By that year the final lines of the *Prelude* were five years old, though unpublished. Thus we have in Farish an author writing, after Wordsworth had produced several volumes, in seeming unconsciousness of Wordsworth as a poet, and himself depicting events of Hawkshead school life that happened just before any scenes described in *An Evening Walk* or the *Prelude*. The great work of Wordsworth and the little work of Farish are, it would appear, independent of each other, just as their authors seem to have lived apart. Yet in choice of subjects, and especially in detail, Mr. Farish shows a love of Nature fresh among English writers, except for Wordsworth's unused example. Moreover, some of the poems indicate that Hawkshead boys studied literature. A song put into the mouth of one boy is in Latin Sapphics. There

was no Classical Tripos for which to work in those days, yet here we have a boy at school in Hawkshead supposed to be capable of singing a song—a very religious one, as it happens—in Latin verse of a difficult sort.

Farish with every sign of zest chronicles the free forays of his comrades and himself into Westmorland. Late one evening the schoolboys start homewards from Rydal, by way of Ambleside and haunted Culgarth. In a mist, the round house on Curwen's Isle looks like a Danish fort, or like the massy Danish church tower of Bartlow, "from which the curfew-ringer scatters, with his swinging lantern, a golden shower into the night":

"But hark to Rayrigg's lowing bull:
There is a charm in yonder sound:
It tells of peace and milk-pails full:
Wild echo sends the menace round.

'Tis thrift and peace, mind's music meet!
Mild Wilberforce, ere he remov'd
Tombuctoo's wrongs, sought this retreat;
Winander's peaceful vale he lov'd.

Do yonder fires dismay the sight,
The furzy mountain's blazing side?—
No bale-fire e'er appall'd the night
With hideous glare, so broad, so wide.

And yet 'twas but a shepherd's boy
That watched the wind's uncertain turn,
Apply'd the spark with wanton joy,
Blowing the turf to make it burn.

On blooming heath, on furze, on brake,
The crackling torrent feeds for miles:
The boatman on Winander Lake
Sees the inverted blaze, and smiles.

But who shall smile when yonder oak,
And all its fair companions fall?—
Sad echoes watch that woodman's stroke
Whose weeding-hook is laid on all.

Three hundred years the butt of storm,
That sapling would become a tree.—
Ah! spare a few of goodliest form,
The rest shall glut thy axe and thee.

Tho' Furness Abbey boast an ore
Richer than Gustaf Vasa saw,
When that same hand the pick-axe bore
Whose Swedish sabre rul'd the law:

Tho' smelting fires flame in the vale,
And iron mills benight the mead,
And—(black the air, like Colebrook-dale)—
Furness be furnace fells indeed;

Yet why should every sapling fall,
To build those smouldering charcoal fires?
Why is the axe laid loose on all?——
—Hide, sods, the forest's funeral-pyres!

Bark every branch and strip it bare;
Pile the lopt faggots close and round;
Bring sward enough, lest the rough air
Of heaven should visit that sad ground.

Beneath his hills of earth he lies!
In him an embryo-navy burns!
Sad are the forest's obsequies!
Sepulchral smoke invests his urns!

Unlike, that fire of shepherd boy
Which gaily trick'd the mountain's side,
When heath and furze expir'd in joy,
While upward roll'd the harmless tide!

On that sing'd mountain black and bare
Soon shall a richer sward be seen:
Hatch'd by warm Kelp, the daisy there
Shall gaily warp that woof of green.

When twice seven times Helvellyn's snow
Beneath the dog-star shall expire,
Yon wood again shall be laid low,
Again shall feed the smelting-fire.

The hop-weed climbing on the hedge,
If pluck'd, returning summer brings:
When forests feel the axe's edge
Slowly their former vigour springs.

Ere oaks, like these, again shall give
Their beauties to Winander's wave;
Ere there again such shadows live,
And there such sylvan honors lave, [text imperfect?]

The Great boat shall be heard to go,
Thro' the cold night, from shore to shore,
While freezing ice and melting snow
Press heavy on the restless oar:

Nor yet the boatman's task be done,—
He dips his hands into the tide,
And heaves huge ice-boards, one by one,
Heaping a wall on either side;

Winning his way across the lake,
With battering maul and iron crow;
The ice still closing in his wake,
In one the knitting fragments grow.

And when these arts will serve no more,
With hawser and with rustic sleight
He slides the ponderous boat ashore:
The kneeling camel ships her freight.

On Bowness point, the blacksmith's shed
Once mark'd the course he had to steer,
With its pale light:—the blacksmith's dead—
But still the boatman's lanthorn's there."

On another occasion the boys come down to survey Winander's steaming clouds from the "Octa-

gon." As they cross in the small ferry-boat, the schoolboys tell George, the boatman, of their destination—Ings Church, with its rich marbles. George is full of his own lore. He lifts his finger towards Eagle Crag, near which the char lie fifty fathom deep. He rouses his charges with the story of Long Island—Curwen's Island—and its nine days' defence by Philipson against the Cromwellians. But George likes Crowholm still better, just because that little isle is innocent of blood. There the ferryman recalls the troops of boats that long ago dipt oars toward the shrine of Mary on Ladyholm. A boy sings a song of the water-hen that builds her nest upon the wave and moors it to a willow tree. Another boy sings of the Three Sister-Lakes. Coniston-mere reverberates with quarry-thunder that startles the diver bird on Devock, makes the fields of Barnsley quake and remember last year's wounds from the plough, and rouses to merriment the "Old Man," ore-ribbed, shaking a tarn in his lap. Ullswater must not envy Windermere its char of the lovely fin. It possesses Airey Force and its pool of silver trout: Helvellyn seeks for it heaven's dew, and every fleecy cloud that Kirkstone wooes is wrung for Ullswater—Ullswater of the early harvests and the fair crag-forms and the woods of Gowbarrow nursed into dark beauty by storms. Winander has sorrows all her own. Ambleside may sing roundelays, while everywhere there is secret mourning for the vanished Roman town that once was there. Rothay may laugh, but Brathay pours an ever-flowing madrigal for Dictis; in memory of Dictis the trees of Brathay gather tears; Elter-water is Dictis's lachrymal: from Langdale, for

Dictis, drift tears of sphered ice. Now sings a loving urchin to a mate bound for the other side of the earth. Must you seek a land where there is not, as here, that gentle sleep of Nature called Winter? Will you lurk, panting, in some rocky retreat, winning revival from the sea-breeze that "shakes from his wings the moisture of the wave"? Then, amid such torrid placidity, remember a stormy day when we raced upon this lake with all the raptures of the storm. Remember how the drifting wind "unfleeced the shuddering earth," while ice-covered Esthwaite could be heard deep-muttering a boding sound. Haply we yet again may listen together to the brawl of Esthwaite hastening to the Lake of Char, past the boulders of Ouse, under the alders of Graythwaite, the branches of which hide the foaming flood, and down the Lin to which she tunes her echoes, the Lin that bears the name of our founder, Sandys's Lin.

One further section of this work shall here be quoted without paraphrase. Here is a scene that must have been "Wordsworthian," thoroughly, before Wordsworth was born. Let this picture suffice to close our claim that the free life accorded to Hawkshead schoolboys was unique in its time.

The Minstrel of the Ferry.—As the boat nears the southern shore, George warns his boyish crew:

> "'Boys, throw no stones at Rayrigg's bull,
> Nor break the church's painted glass.'
>
> At Ings the little troop divide:
> Part stay and rest their weary limbs,
> The other, with elastic stride,
> Up Kentmere's vale and mountain climbs.

From Ylbel's top or from High Street,
They mark Hawes-water, stretching near,
And Kirkstone's towering bonnet great,
The pride of loveliest Ullesmere.

And Lowthers' thicken'd woods they see,
Where herds of high-bred horses rov'd
Behind their chiefs, untam'd and free,
Leading the tartar-life they lov'd.

Their schoolboy sports are now begun ;
Sisyphean rocks roll down the steep ;
The sheep alarm'd, tho' distant, run :
Each adds a stone to Ylbel's heap."

When all are reassembled in the valley, they hear and applaud the heroic conduct of Bernard Gilpin of Kentmere, "untamed in faith by Bishop Bonner's fires." Having journeyed by Kendal Castle to Bowness, the troop, under the dead blacksmith's wall, raise persistent shouts across the lake for the ferryman. Travellers on the other side, descending the hills in the dark towards the wharf, call out, and the schoolboys make a game of putting names to the voices. The carrier arrives and sings a song, none too refined. Then the carrier stops short, crying, "Enough; we must now work, for here comes the ferry !"

"George toughly plies the measur'd oar,
Tho' hardly to the eye he moves ;
His light, receding from the shore,
Seems loth to leave the house he loves.

Straightway the busy crew prepare
To wheel the carts on board the boat ;
George soon arrives, and first with care,
He trims his lanthorn near the hut.

'My little lighthouse,' George then said,
'I've known thee on a stormy night,
When snows fell heavy on thy head,
Tho' buried, still to keep thy light.'

A student then from Granta tells
Of one eight days beneath the snows;
And twice she heard the Sabbath bells,
Yet lived six months, as Histon knows.

But little do the bustling crew
The student and his wonders heed;
Intent their business each pursue;
George takes his oar and off they speed;

'Bowness, good-night,' the carrier said,
'If the mist take us in the main,
I would not answer with my head,
But we may all come back again.'

'Aye, that we may, beyond a doubt,'
Says George, 'I've sometimes labour'd back
Thrice to the spot whence I set out,
The mist has been so thick and black.

'At last I've made my daughter call,
And shap'd my compass by her voice;
And now her song shall charm us all,
For she's the compass of my choice.'

'Right,' says the carrier, 'she shall sing
Her father's welcome to his inn:
Boys, are your heads beneath your wing?
'Tis time our pastimes should begin.'

'Now lift the light,' the boatman says,
And calls aloud, 'A song, a song!
His daughter saw the signal blaze,
And heard her father's accents strong.

With cheerful haste his Edith came
Obedient to her father's will,
Her fluttering apron round the flame
Rashly extending, but with skill.

Hidden her comb : her yellow hair,
Wound round her head, was braided tight ;
Dubious, by starts, the flickering flare
Gave her full beauties to the night.

Beneath the Great Boat tree she stood,
The glimmering leaves a glory shed ;
Save at her feet the dashing flood
And leaflets whispering o'er her head,

No voice was heard, except the roar
Of distant waters down the Llyn ;
The Great Boat slumber'd on its oar,
And still was every voice within.

The Minstrel of Winandermere
In low and simple measure sung,
Her accents but the music were
To grace the words that on it hung.

Nothing was there to draw the mind
From the full meaning of her song ;
Closely was sense with sound combin'd
And measur'd clauses left her tongue.

The tune, adjusted to the words,
With timid awe its distance kept,
Never intruding useless chords :
The subject ne'er the queen out-stept.

Her music was the voice of soul,
And spoke to mind and not to ear ;
The hearer while he felt it whole,
Yet hardly ever seem'd to hear.

The mind on meaning fully bent,
Sound was discarded from the thought ;
Yet still the music was not shent
But fuller on the soul it wrought.

Felt was the arrow of her song
The more for seeing not the bow ;
Like mallet on the sounding gong,
Thrill'd thro' the soul her accents low.

Every pause had measure due;
The words and music jointly wrought;
Every word had accent true;
Strength was in combination sought.

The according muscles of her song,
Wrought more by their combin'd effect,
Than falling from the finest tongue,
Had words from music met neglect.

'Tis consort that gives music sway,
The wedded love of song and sense;
Sense rules because song will obey,
Song rules the more from this obedience.

The Great Boat rested on its oars
Whenever she the tune began;
But ere the close, round answering shores,
Low voice of oars in descant ran.

The flickering light the motion caught,
The feet obedient measure kept;
By nature and her father taught,
The sober Dance of Oars she stept!

But ever, at the closing note,
Silence again his sceptre sway'd,
Echo was hush'd, and in the boat,
No sound was heard—nor danc'd the maid."

The subject here presented by Farish—not without carelessnesses in expression—belongs to the same order of experience and feeling as Wordsworth's night idyll about the school urchins putting forth homewards from Bowness, after an afternoon of boisterous sports, and tarrying to land the Minstrel of the Troop on a little island (probably Rampholm) and rowing away gently to hear him blow his flute alone upon the rock.

Are we not compelled to see, in such descriptions as these quoted from Farish, a state of mind, raised by the intermingling of honest mankind with honest nature, only in intensity differing from frequent states

of Wordsworth's mind? And do not these passages breathe from an ample, simple life, which schoolboys could enjoy only under an unusually wise dispensation?

The supposition that there was a kind of Wordsworthian life and thought—inspired by Lakeland—before Wordsworth, is somewhat strengthened by the following lines. The Wordsworth family permits their being here printed, for the first time, from a letter of the poet's to Mr. Seymour Tremenherne, December 16, 1845, regarding certain reports to the Council of Education:—

"Generation after generation will, I trust, start from a higher point than the preceding one. . . . Let me ask you, dear Sir, whether throughout the Minutes too little value is not set upon the occupations of children out of doors, under the direction, or by the permission, of their Parents, comparatively with what they do or acquire at school? Is not the knowledge inculcated by the Teacher or derived under his management from books too exclusively dwelt upon, so as almost to put out of sight that which comes, without being sought for, from intercourse with nature and from experience in the actual employments and duties which a child's situation in the country, however unfavourable, will lead him to or impose upon him? How much of what is precious comes into our minds, in all ranks of society, not as knowledge entering formally in the shape of knowledge, but as infused thro' the constitution of things and by the grace of God! There is no condition of life, however unpromising, that does not daily exhibit something of this truth. I do not relish the words of one of the Reporters (Mr. Allen, I believe, whose notices are generally very valuable) in which he would reconcile the Parents to the expense of having their children educated in school by remarking that the wear and tear of clothes will be less; and an equivalent thus saved, and in shoe leather. Excuse this disagreement in opinion, as coming from one who spent half of his boyhood in running wild among the Mountains.

It struck me also that, from the same cause, too little attention is paid to books of imagination, which are eminently useful in calling forth intellectual power. We must not only

WINDERMERE FERRY INN, AS IT WAS IN WORDSWORTH'S TIME

(*From an old picture*)

have knowledge but the means of wielding it, and that is done infinitely more thro' the imaginative faculty assisting both in the collection and [in the] application of facts than is generally believed. But I must conclude.—Believe me, my dear Sir, sincerely your much obliged, WM. WORDSWORTH.

Just as Wordsworth read *The Minstrels of Winandermere* without hinting, on the margins of his copy or anywhere in the book, that Farish was indebted to him for example—or was even personally known to him—so Farish produced his work without one direct or indirect reference to the schoolfellow whom we should have supposed it natural for him to mention. Yet intimacy between these authors had not ceased with life at school. *The Minstrels of Winandermere* is quoted in the *Guide to the Lakes*, and in a note to *Guilt and Sorrow* the author of that poem speaks of Charles Farish as his schoolfellow and friend. It is therefore open to any one to conjecture that Farish would never have composed his *Minstrels of Winandermere* if Wordsworth had not previously composed his *Evening Walk*. But a reading of Farish's book will almost certainly convey to the mind an impression that Farish thought in complete detachment from Wordsworth. Indeed, Farish's preface indicates that he put the last touches to his verses long before their publication. So *The Minstrels* may have been written before *An Evening Walk*—nay, for the matter of that, may just possibly in some form have been read aloud to Wordsworth at Cambridge, by the elder youth hailing from Hawkshead School, ere *An Evening Walk* was conceived. Were this possibility a probability, the absence of Wordsworth's name from Farish's book might bear a new significance.

CHAPTER VIII

HAWKSHEAD: THE SCHOOLBOY

The first glimpse we have of Wordsworth as an eight-year-old newcomer in the Hawkshead Grammar School is distinctly associated with literature.

The books chiefly studied by our boy poet, permitted though they were at the hands of his superiors, were masterpieces, but right battering rams against chivalry and sentimentalism—*Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Tom Jones*. Yet the boy also loved *The Arabian Nights*, and in the fifth book of the *Prelude* (50) we are told how, by Ulverston Sands, the boy dreamt of an Arabian chevalier who rode up to him bearing a stone and a shell. The stone turned into Euclid's Elements and the shell into a book uttering unknown harmonies. The Arab was on his way to secrete both of these tables written by the finger of mighty Man—secrete them for safety against impending destruction. One scripture was fitted to hold acquaintance with the stars and wed reason to reason, but the other work was a god-book, yea a many-god-book, with voices more various than all the winds, to exhilarate and solace mankind; yet when this god-book was brought before the dreamer for a moment, a prophetic blast sounded in his ears a kind of chant of doom and deluge. Away rode the Arab with his treasures, in quest of burial for them. The dreamer kept pace

with the armed Eastern. Lo, the Eastern, looking behind him towards the child, revealed Don Quixote's face—and sped along the illimitable wastes of sand, with the "fleet waters of a drowning world in chase of him."

This fifth book of the *Prelude* is Wordsworth's attempt to value Literature as compared with Nature and with Religion. His youth was spent under the educative power of wonder. He protests against coercive, rigid plans of "practical instruction," and is thankful that his early days were spent

> "Safe from an evil which these days have laid
> Upon the children of the land, a pest
> That might have dried me up, body and soul." (227)

Books, freely loved, are felt by youth, however dimly, to be

> "Powers
> For ever hallowed; only less,
> For what we are and what we may become,
> Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God." (218)

Two thoughts come to the poet about the might of literature — one inspiring, the other alarming. The first thought is (29) that though the whole frame of earth were blasted and ocean's bed lay singed and bare,

> "Yet would the living Presence still subsist
> Victorious, and composure would ensue,
> And kindlings like the morning." (36)

The spirit of Nature would persist. The consolation of this idea is tempered by a second reflection, upon the frail tenure upon immortality of Bard and Sage (54):

> "Oh, why hath not the Mind
> Some element to stamp her image on,

In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?" (45)

Mathematical knowledge (the stone under the Arab-Quixote's arm)—is even that to fail? And Poesy? It is the shell which, taken from the Arab's hand, utters affrighting music predictive of an end to all lovely thinking on earth. From it issued

"An unknown tongue,
Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,
A loud prophetic blast of harmony;
An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold
Destruction to the children of the earth
By deluge, now at hand." (93)

The thought is enough to make the youthful poet wish himself safe from reason in innocent unreason of the Quixote sort, as he contemplates a treasured volume in his hand—

"Poor earthly casket of immortal verse,
Shakspeare or Milton, labourers divine!" (164)

Up to that time in Wordsworth's life, no criticism had appeared showing the solvent nature of Cervantes's ironic tale. The dream of the world's Chivalry engulfed, like Ulverston Sands, by the "fleet waters of a drowning world" was a miracle of child-intuition. But it was more. It was a prophecy of amazing connection with coincidence; for, years afterwards, when fresh from France's Revolution, Wordsworth, pacing these very Sands of Ulverston, met a stranger whose greeting was "Robespierre is dead!" This seemed a moment's glad respite from the fleet waters. The Quixote-Arab dream, we are told, often recurred to its dreamer in his early youth. The figure gradually became that of a gentle dweller

in the desert, crazed with love and sympathy and self-communings too protracted. Wordsworth revered this personage, did not pity him; had moods in which he would have chosen him as one to lead him through the wilds. We shall see that Wordsworth was at Hawkshead in company with human beings—"Matthew" and the "Solitary" of *The Yew Tree Seat*—whose tensely strung natures were at times pure-fantastical, and probably protestant towards reigning conventionalities. We cannot doubt that influences from such lives would convey themselves into the boy's mind, till Don Quixote sometimes appeared a breathing guide through deserts of vision. Nor is it to be doubted that Wordsworth, all through youth, had his own private inheritance of almost mad obsessions with which to fight—dread storms of character attending the play of light. He had hardly been a week at Hawkshead when, one evening, walking alone by Esthwaite, he stumbled on a heap of clothes belonging to some bather. But no bather was to be seen. Next day (mark here the usual freedom of the Hawkshead schoolboy) Wordsworth formed one of an anxious crowd that for hours awaited results from grappling operations in the lake. At last, where all the surroundings were so fair, the dead man rose bolt upright from the ooze, his pallid face a shape of spectral terror. Yet Wordsworth recollects himself as unmoved by any soul-debasing fear, for already such sights "among the shining streams of romance had fed his inward eye." Not in vain was it that the Spirit of the Universe interwined this dark strain among the passions that built up his soul. It is from these Hawkshead days, we must remember, that the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from*

Recollections of Early Childhood derives much of its inspiration.

While thus following Nature to her secret springs, the child passed from one to the other of three phases. There was, first, the phase of pure joy in a world almost supernal: a splendour in the grass; a glory in the flowers; a development or increase of the child's entrancement at Cockermouth, where his thoughts coursed "light as the wind along the grass." Upon a jutting eminence of Esthwaite the Hawkshead schoolboy would stand alone, impassioned and entranced, and a holy calm would come upon him till bodily eyes were forgotten, what he actually gazed at appearing to be something in himself, a dream, a prospect of the mind. Such was the time of utmost exultation in the poet's being—of radiance from within that never was on sea or land, and that already, as Professor Knight indicates, had passed away when the Ode was actually written as a recollection (in tranquillity). The Ode is a residuum from a prolonged ecstasy of childhood. Similar possession of the sensibilities of childhood by the breathings of beauty given forth by Earth conveys extraordinary power to the poems of the seventeenth-century writer, Thomas Traherne. If ever there was Wordsworthian thought before Wordsworth, here it is (*see* Note). Much of the content of Wordsworth's Ode is to be found in Traherne's *The Preparation.* The best way of training oneself to understand Wordsworth's first and most powerful phase, would be to read through Traherne's poems. Yet Wordsworth never saw them: they were rescued for the world by Mr. E. T. Dobell and Mr. H. I. Bell, only recently.

Secondly, there was the phase wherein fits of passion drew the young dreamer towards mere anarchy. Freedom was, to this creature, uncharted; it was a tempest, a redundant energy, vexing its own creation (*Prelude*, i. 37). We shall meet this strain of sullen, solitary, inexpressible self-torment all through the youth of Wordsworth. He who divines Wordsworth as a poet born wisely passive to beauty guesses badly. On Hawkshead Moor this poet, like his Tuscan forerunner, had seen hell; in his own fashion he had passed through the consecration of being "with the wild beasts." We must not forget the story of the foil, and the story of the whipped portraits, from Penrith days. At Hawkshead there were moments when the child of imagination, contemplating in soberness the approach of madness, could almost, in delight, unite his lot with the inspiration of the maniac and freely go with him upon his wildered errand. No poet, perhaps, with more difficulty learnt self-control; though few poets learnt it more completely. He was to show, as no other English poet but Milton did so thoroughly, that life is a vision of the noblest realities. "He wrote as he lived, and lived as he wrote. His poetry had its heart in his life, and his life found its voice in his poetry." Thus did Christopher Wordsworth truly write of his uncle's austere governance of his life and his imaginative forces.

The third phase in the formation of the poet's power was the metaphysical mood, no longer impulsively unquestioning, when shades of the prison house began to close upon the youth. He could no longer lapse like Derwent River from one cool loveliness to

another, at ease in the external world. The reader will presently be asked to note what a break there is between this lapsing from one cool loveliness to another in *The Evening Walk* (our Chapter XII.) and the harmonising of the deeper throbbings of Man's spirit with Nature's music, in the later poems of Wordsworth. The problem of man's under-soul stirred him, with the " blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised " (*Ode*, 145). It is this metaphysical experience that raises Wordsworth so far above Keats, not as a songster, but as an interpreter of the passion of life—of the still sad music of humanity. On Hawkshead Moor, let the student read all the famous Ode, to ponder these three phases. Then let him turn to the fifth book of the *Prelude*, there noticing first the opening lines that so tragically discuss this antithesis between seemingly cool external nature and the perfervid spirit of man, the observer; and, secondly, noting the mastered sanity with which Wordsworth addresses Coleridge (230) upon the privilege they both had enjoyed, as boys, of ranging over the surface of nature and through the records of man's spirit, free to drink in all, up to the measure of their native capacities.

Study proves it hopeless to try to construct a diary or year-book of the schoolboy's mind at Hawkshead, so as to mark each stage in the fusing of these moods. The first mood was the predominant one. Perhaps the later two phases were somewhat helped towards light by the Recluse of *The Yew Tree Seat*. A common path, now enclosed, skirted the eastern side of Esthwaite Lake, and was the favourite evening walk of the boys. Not far from this path, and on

the main road, is a tree still shown as Wordsworth's Yew; but the real yew (long gone) stood forty yards nearer Hawkshead. It was reckoned exactly a mile distant from the village. Upon a seat constructed under this yew, William often held converse with a world-embittered individual who had received a university education, and who possessed a small estate in the neighbourhood.

Wordsworth penned this note in explanation of *The Yew Tree Seat*:—

"The individual whose habits and character are here given was a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a man of talent and learning, who had been educated at one of our universities, and returned to pass his time in seclusion on his own estate. He died a bachelor in middle age. Induced by the beauty of the prospect, he built a small summer house on the rocks above the peninsula on which the Ferry House stands. This property afterwards passed into the hands of the late Mr. Curwen."

The Claife Inclosure Act of 1799 distributed tracts of the eastern side of the lake to a number of landholders; and these awards were set forth on a series of official maps. It is a pleasure to the author to remember the courtesy of Mr. W. Heelis, solicitor, who in his Hawkshead office displayed the documents and charts connected with this Act. Then and there, amid the musty parchments, the Recluse of *The Yew Tree Seat* was tracked down—the Rev. William Braithwaite, of Satterhow, who by this Act of 1799 acquired the land on which he shortly afterwards erected the summer-house. On the same day the burial registers of Hawkshead rendered up this entry: "The Rev. William Braithwaite of Satterhowe, Master of Arts, Vicar of Risely in Bedfordshire and Vicar of Burton

Petwarden in Lincolnshire, Dyed at Hawkshead on the 8th day of Febry. 1800 and was buried in the Church on the 12th, Aged 46." This, then, is the Recluse of *The Yew Tree Seat:* the individual from whom Curwen bought "The Station," and who died a bachelor in middle age. The Braithwaites are a numerous clan about Hawkshead and Kendal. The clan came from Iceland and settled first at Satterhow, near Windermere. The Recluse possessed this ancestral settlement of the Braithwaites, and inhabited a hall of the Tudor period, now absolutely decayed and deserted, as forlorn a domestic ruin as may be found in Lakeland. Every traveller from the Ferry to Hawkshead can see this stricken building on the left, just after passing the southerly road to Cunsey.

The embittered, middle-aged philosopher depicted in *The Yew Tree Seat* stands out as probably the first human character the poet tried to sketch. The bees shunned this Hawkshead yew tree. Its poisonous effect on cattle was eventually to lead to its uprooting. The middle-aged gentleman had piled a couch of stones under it, training mosses to spread over the stones, and the tree's branches to weave a protecting roof and eaves. He had gone forth to the world, in youth, dowered with genius, and proof in his purity of heart against jealousy and hate, but not against indifference. It was neglect from the world of culture (says the poem) that drove him to frequent this lonely loveliness, companion to the straggling sheep, the stone-chat and the glancing sand-piper. The younger genius learnt a fruitful lesson from this somewhat morbid companionship. The healthy boy's mind was

SATTERHOW

(Home of the "Yew-tree Seat" Recluse)

able to perceive that however disguised, pride is littleness—

> "True dignity abides with him alone
> Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
> Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
> In lowliness of heart."

We can scarcely ponder too long *The Yew Tree Seat*. It was composed in part at school at Hawkshead: the date of completion is given as 1795: and by 1795 Wordsworth had undergone the shock and training of the French preparations for Revolution. Possibly the opening lines, with their commonplace thought of "no sparkling rivulet spreading the verdant herb," may be all remaining of the schoolboy's composition; but this is unlikely. It is much more likely that the poem, although a rewritten and strengthened thing, is based on the vital sketch by the schoolboy. If so, we are arrested by a plan of thought instinct with nobility, and unaffected in its language: the musing of one willing enough to spend an hour listening to the "curling waves that by the soft impulse save the mind from vacancy;" and yet one who, even when Nature had subdued him to herself, would not consent to forget that human life presents a scene of kindred loveliness.

We may pause here to reflect on two changes of taste that have taken place in regard to Lakeland scenery. In the period with which we are dealing, the few who visited the Lakes sought out points from which to look down on Nature. Hence the country was mapped out for such view-points, or "stations," the Windermere Octagon or Summer House being one of the eminences. Arthur Young in his *Six*

Months' Tour thus speaks of the well-known "Fifth Station," on the other side of the lake from the Octagon :—

"The point on which you stand is the side of a large ridge of hills that form the eastern boundary of the lake, and the situation is high enough to look down upon all the objects: a circumstance of great importance, which painting cannot imitate."

But our poet was one of the first to learn and point out that, as Gray had also taught in his Journal (written in 1769), "all points that are much elevated spoil the beauty of the valley, and make its parts, which are not large, look poor and diminutive." The reason why artists do not select eminences from which to paint a country of valleys simply is that, however detailed and extensive a map such a view may afford, and however exhilarating the climb to achieve it, it is not a picture, and is not beautiful, though, in certain regards, interesting.

The second change of taste to be mentioned was probably brought about silently by the higher spirit of reverence for mountain lands breathed into British humanity by Wordsworth. Who, of our day, has even once heard salvoes of artillery discharged in Lakeland as a tribute to its gracious loveliness? In the closing years of the eighteenth century most lakes in Westmorland and Cumberland had each a pleasure boat fitted with cannon. Mr. West mentions with satisfaction such a boat belonging to the hotel at Lowood, provided with six brass swivel guns, "to enjoy the echoes."

Before considering further the thoughts and the writings of Wordsworth at school, we may close our

OLD PACKHORSE ROAD FROM WHITEHAVEN TO HAWKSHEAD

(Seen from "Meeting of the Ways")

ROAD FROM COCKERMOUTH TO HAWKSHEAD BY SKELWITH

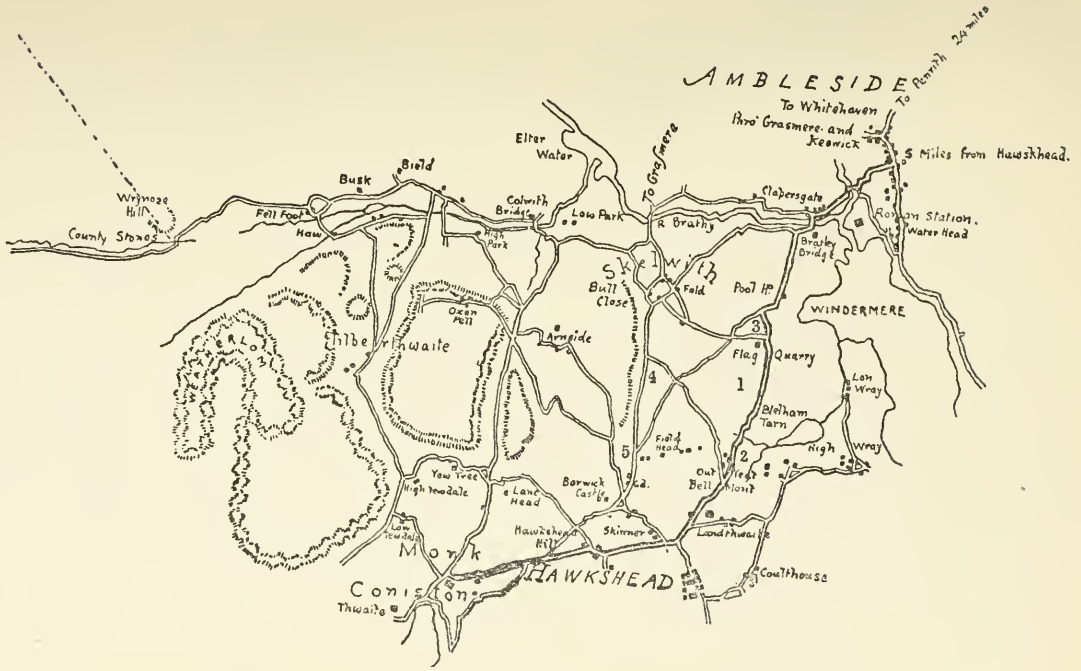
(Seen from "Meeting of the Ways")

chapter by mention of two happenings: a ride homewards on holiday, and the death of the poet's father. The ride occurred before the death of John Wordsworth in his son's fourteenth year, for William speaks of the affair as occurring "one Christmas time, at the glad eve of its dear holidays." Such joyous holidays did not occur after 1783. Moreover, we are in plain words (twelfth book of the *Prelude*) informed that John Wordsworth died before his boys had been "ten days home."

The three brothers were eagerly expecting the ponies that were to take them "home." Wordsworth distinctly says "home"; Professor Knight's note (*Wordsworth's Poems*, iii. 353), assuming that "home" meant Penrith, and that the father died in that town, is apparently wrong. The Cockermouth register and all other sources from which one can draw information show that the father died in his own bed at "home." At a "Parting of the Ways," the boy-poet waited for the ponies (*Prelude*, xii. 287) that were to take him and his brothers home from school. There are five theories as to the right spot to assign to this parting. Three of the five—as given by Knight—are vitiated by Knight's error already noticed. The fourth is a fairly good guess. The fifth is Mr. Gordon Wordsworth's, and much the best (see "5" on map, p. 99). Our pictures are taken from this point, which is a short half-mile north of Borwick Castle (or "Ground"), on the ridge between the road to Skelwith and the old pack-horse track leading by Arnside over Wrynose to Whitehaven.

Mr. John Wordsworth, riding home through Lorton Vale to Cockermouth one wild night, after

official duty done at Seaton, became chilled to the marrow. He had never been cheerful since the death of his wife. Dropsy had laid its hold on him. This disease was increased by the chill, and the widower succumbed. The entry in Cockermouth register is: "1784, Buried, Mr. John Wordsworth, Attorney at Law, aged 42, Jany. 2, Dropsy." The death took place on December 30, 1783. The books of Whitehaven Castle show that Mr. Wordsworth faithfully attended to his rounds of supervision till near the end. For example, we find by an entry that he held a Baron's Court as "Steward of Millom" in October of 1783. He was also "Steward of Seaton, Stainburn, and Little Clifton." The court rolls of the manor show that he was steward of Seaton from 14th June 1765 to 12th November 1782. John Wordsworth evidently led his life in companionship with the shadow of his own dignity. The silence of Cockermouth records indicates that he took no active part in the parish's affairs. Only once is his name affixed to these records, and then the signature is perfunctory; he signs an advertisement as a Guardian of the Poor. The weekly *Cumberland Pacquet* dismisses his loss with these commonplaces of courtesy: "Jan. 6, 1784. Last Tuesday, about half past 12 o'clock, Mr. Wordsworth, Attorney, of Cockermouth, departed this life, after a short confinement. He lived deservedly esteemed, and died universally lamented." The same paper records that on the Thursday following the death, the Rev. Mr. Gillbanks preached to the Cockermouth Men's Mutual Aid Society, afterwards presiding over a much-enjoyed banquet. Neither in the sermon nor at the banquet, so far as record tells, was any mention



THE MEETING OF THE WAYS

Adapted from Map of The County Palatine of Lancaster, by W. Yates, 1786.

(Most probable spot is marked "5.")

made of the Lowther agent. A reminiscent letter, written to Miss Pollard in 1787 by Dorothy, includes these words: "It is indeed mortifying to my brother and me that amongst all those who visited at my father's house he had not one real friend." William leaves us no clear words of affection for his parent. But late in life he wrote the sonnet *In Sight of the Town of Cockermouth*, as a meditation on Fatherhood —very possibly the writer was conscious that he had been a strange son to a strange father. In this sonnet the poet begs of his children that should any of them who outstrip him in life's race remember pain between parent and offspring, they will regard the chidings of a father as prompted by affection, and thus filial love may regain its place in their hearts.

CHAPTER IX

HAWKSHEAD: SCHOOL FRIENDS

The Wordsworth children now fell to the care of two relatives who little understood them, their uncles Christopher Crackanthorpe and Richard Wordsworth. A few years later than this period, a letter of Dorothy's reveals the family circumstances that more or less prevailed during the time from the father's death till William became independent.

"I do not now pass half my time alone. I can bear with the ill-nature of all my relatives, for the affection of my brothers consoles me in all my griefs: . . . William and Christopher are very clever. . . . John, who is to be a sailor, has a most affectionate heart. He is not so bright as either William or Christopher, but he has very good common sense. . . . Richard, the eldest, is equally affectionate and good, but he is far from being as clever as William. . . . Many a time have William, John, Christopher, and myself shed tears together, tears of the bitterest sorrow. We all of us feel each day the loss we sustained when we were deprived of our parents; and each day do we receive fresh insults of the most mortifying kind, the insults of servants. . . . Uncle Kit (who is our guardian) cares little for us. . . . We have been told a thousand times that we were liars."

Thus sadly wrote Dorothy from Penrith. Mr. Knight has had access to letters (unpublished) which lead him to say: —

"The Penrith relatives were ungenial people. The grandfather had not the best of tempers, and the grandmother had little affection to spare: cold, unsympathetic natures, both of them."

Dorothy, domiciled usually at Penrith, had the worst of it. The brothers returned after their father's death to Hawkshead School.

Curiously enough, William never mentions the doings or sayings of these schoolfellows of his own blood, his brothers. Whether, even, they lived in the same house with him, is matter for surmise. But it is not left to question that he loved that Dame Anne Tyson under whose roof he, at any rate, found simple hospitality and homely guidance of the right sort.

Dim and not very intelligently transmitted are the village traditions about Anne Tyson. A captivating strain of the legend bids us believe that the dame first lived in the house at present occupied by the widow of Isaac Hodgson. Canon Rawnsley, who has such intimate acquaintance with Hawkshead and all its surroundings, contributes to Knight's *Wordsworth* a careful examination of this story.

Would that we could implicitly trust this "Church Hill House" to have been the poet's first home! Then it would be easy for us to understand his references in the fourth book of the *Prelude* to the lowly bed whence he watched the moon couched in the tall ash—and to the brook, "stripped of its voice," "boxed within the garden." The reasons against our unreservedly giving our heart to this delicious spot are several. The *Prelude* passage says nothing of spout or well (unless it be the "box"), but refers to the "pretty prisoner" as a rivulet dimpling down to a channel "paved by man's officious care." This channel must surely be the somewhat distant waterway known as "The Flags," behind Grandy Nook. Wordsworth does not mention living in two houses.

MRS. HODGSON'S COTTAGE, HAWKSHEAD

(Upper room said by some to be Wordsworth's)

On the contrary, he leaves us a prose note indicating that, as an undergraduate, he re-visited *the* house where he had lived with Anne Tyson while at Hawkshead. Similarly, in Dorothy's *Scottish Tour*, it is *the* house that is recollected. Finally, villagers are divided in their allegiance to this house as home for the poet; and there is no tittle of documentary support for its claim.

All tradition—to tread surer if less attractive ground—agrees that Wordsworth spent at least most of his schooldays with Anne Tyson at a house in Grandy Nook. The street that makes an elbow round the back of this house is called "Queen Anne Street," a name believed to originate in a pleasantry doing honour to the dame who held humble court in this corner, not without a measure of authority that commanded respect from boys and villagers. Anne was never married. Her heart was pledged to schoolboys. Her lowly cottage, "so beautiful amid the pleasant fields," was one of many having a ministration all their own in that community. The frugal dame regulated William's clothing as well as his food. At the sunny seat round the stone table under the dark pine of her garden, in summer, or by her cosy kitchen fire in winter, the boys were welcome to play their silent games of crosses, or noisy beggar-my-neighbour with most beggarly cards. These winter firelit games were all the better enjoyed when the frost bit outside, "with keen and silent tooth," or the splitting ice on Esthwaite, struggling above pent-up air, gave forth to the snowy meadows protracted yells common enough to Lakeland ears, though the *Prelude's* description of them (i. 540) has

been ignorantly condemned as forced. Late would the dame sit watching for the return of her charges, when, released from school, they had wheeled about, "like untired horses, caring not for home," to shoe themselves with steel, and smite the precipices near the lake with their din of merriment. Not seldom the poet among them would skate away from the clamour into a silent bay and cut across the reflex of a star. In July nights, joining the troop, a mere boy again, the poet would not scruple to swell the roar with which the revellers, returning unwearied from the woodlands, swept homeward to their dames through streets where every labourer had been long asleep. So feared was the exuberance of the noisy "collegians" even by day (floating tradition informs us) that the small private schools habitually released their scholars half-an-hour before the grammar school flung outward its doors when the morning's tasks were over.

We have a picture (*Prelude*, i. 357) of William Wordsworth, on a summer's evening, weary of the playground's din, stealthily unmooring an Esthwaite pleasure boat, and moving out "among the watchful mountain echoes." He rowed a straight course with his eyes fixed on a crag on the starry horizon, and suddenly he found himself arrested, trembling; for beyond that utmost crag uploomed a huge black peak that seemed to move upon him "like a thing of measured motive and purpose all its own."

Again, far away as Ings on the east or Rydal on the north, the urchin-genius and his mates would roam, untended by any tutor. On horseback, when purses were heavy after holidays (*Prelude*, ii. 94),

ESTHWAITE LAKE

(Hills of Langdale, in distance)

they scampered to Furness Abbey, racing unabashed through the chancel where lay cross-legged knights and the stony abbot in a gloom made glorious with the song of an invisible wren. On other days (*Prelude*, i. 326), these half-mad creatures braved the precipices of Yewdale for ravens' nests, or "swept along the plain of Windermere with rival oars"; "we ran a boisterous course." Yet again (*Prelude*, ii. 47), the boy, the inland-bred boy, would steal off by himself to the Ulverston Sands, watching the sea grow radiant with warning, to the distant shepherds' huts, of a rising moon. The stranger-child, "linking the spectacle with no conscious memory of a kindred sight" would gaze upon the leagues of shining waters, not wrapt in sense of quietness or peace—only busy, in these fields of light, with the pleasure of a bee among the flowers.

But Wordsworth remains an inland poet; the brine in his blood was faint, for a great Englishman; rivers early washed away particles of the due proportion. The Cumberland coast forces from him no memorable cry of sea pride: *Peele Castle*, based on a quite ridiculous oil painting of a tempest at Rampside, on the Lancashire coast, devotes almost all its verbal artistry to description of a pond-like calm; *Tintern Abbey* and the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* use the foam on Britain's shores as a Platonic ideogram, seized "though inland far we be." By Dover's cliffs, or those of Calais, a British navy is not within expression: at Dover, "inland within a hollow vale," the poet by instinct takes his station; arriving there after the Channel trip from France, "here on his native soil he breathes once more." *The Happy Warrior*, a poem

based on the characters of his seafaring brother John and Lord Nelson, does not once refer to the ocean. Addressing the same brother John in the poem beginning "When to the attractions," Wordsworth uses a phrase such as no true seaman would accept—"Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone." Even Wordsworth's single ship-poem (*Where lies the land?*) ends as Ovid might have ended it:

> "Doubt, and something dark,
> Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
> Is with me."

PEELE CASTLE, NEAR RAMPSIDE, LANCASHIRE

CHAPTER X

HAWKSHEAD: SCHOOLMASTERS AND OTHER TEACHERS

During the poet's attendance at the Hawkshead School founded by Archbishop Sandys, there was a succession of no less than four head masters, of whom the only one important to Wordsworth was the Rev. William Taylor, who reigned from 1782 to 1786.

One of the scanty facts we know as to the relations of William Taylor to his wonderful pupil is that he selected Wordsworth, with some other boys, to write verses commemorating the completion of the second centenary of the school's foundation. The year would be 1786—the same year that saw the Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems. Wordsworth's Autobiographical Notes say: "The verses were much admired, far more than they deserve, for they were but a tame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style."

Happily for us, Wordsworth preserved these verses, and in 1851 the whole poem was given to the world as a curiosity—apparently left just as the boy created it. There are in it plenty of stilted second-hand phrases, which Wordsworth is content to transmit for our instruction; "the Sun's flaming chariot"; "the God of Day, in all the pomp of light"; "Science clapping her strong wings"; "the chequered bow that paints the sky"; and so forth. The point for us to

note is one which the annotators have overlooked. The year 1783 was the last in which Wordsworth enjoyed holidays at Cockermouth. In 1784, 1785, 1786, he and Dorothy were probably twice a year together at Penrith, under the grandfather's roof at night, and—depend upon it—roaming the Penrith fields all day long, after the manner of their happy Cockermouth companionship. Does any result come out in this Commemoration? For answer to the question, let the student turn to Professor Knight's eighth volume of the *Poems*, page 211, or to the Oxford *Poems*, page 618, and trace in these Commemoration lines four things: the grateful reference to the happiness of the Hawkshead school-time; the sense that the masters strove to lead their more intelligent pupils "to follow Nature to her secret springs"; the metrical instinct of the writer of future odes releasing itself in passion, towards the end of the poem, from the restraint of the thought-enclosing couplet; and especially the passage in which science, aided by philosophy, is hailed as having swept away in the seventeenth century the mediævalism which too easily retained unearned worship.

> "Britain, who long her warriors had adored,
> And deem'd all merit centred in the sword;
> Britain, who thought to stain the field was fame,
> Now honour'd Edward's less than Bacon's name."

Does not this poem savour of Penrith Beacon as much as of Hawkshead School? or else—the only other hypothesis that occurs—was the teaching at Hawkshead School sufficient of itself to turn away the poet's mind from themes wherein "to stain the fields" is lauded as the highest glory? Was Taylor

(more famous as "Matthew") a Whig or a Radical, a Quakerish Radical, mayhap? Ere turning to consider Mr. Taylor in particular, let us pursue for a little the subject of our poet's Village Verses.

Wordsworth records that the accomplishment of the poem of Commemoration put it into his head to "compose verses from the impulse of his own mind," so, while yet a schoolboy, he wrote a long poem running upon his own adventures, and the scenery of the country in which he was brought up. "The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected poems."

This poem therefore, *Dear Native Regions*, belongs, like the last-considered verses, to the author's sixteenth year. The prose note attached to the poem informs us that the thoughts and images contained in the original long poem had been dispersed through the poet's other writings—an indication of the way in which William, like Dorothy, constantly treasured the impressions of childhood as a valuable standard of judgment in this world of many illusions. The little production is notable in the following particulars. It is a revulsion from the tyranny of Pope's versification, and an experiment in the octosyllabic measures afterwards adopted so largely by Byron and Scott. Young Wordsworth makes his octosyllabics a brooding, slow measure, *more suo;* differing in quality almost wholly from the hobby-horse blithesomeness of *Hudibras's* metre, and even from the swiftly gliding music of Coleridge's *Christabel*—the music of a snake-charmer. Again, we notice in this poem that, standing with his face towards the Cumberland

hills, the poet identifies Furness with that county; and, probably with the flat fenland of Cambridge as a gloomy picture at the back of his brain, he promises everlasting fidelity of affection to these "dear native regions." Again, though not strikingly original, the concluding thought of the poem is likely to be Wordsworth's own, and obtained from direct observation. He will even at his last days think lovingly of the land of his youth, just as the sinking sun, although it shed not one memorial gleam, at parting down into the valley, throws still a lingering ray of fondness to the dim hills where first he rose.

But in the same year, 1786, the young singer, like an eaglet in his first sweep of power, sudden as serene, through the royalty of æther, gave forth a cry of consecrated aloofness that merits our respectful study. First, we notice that our student-poet has been brooding over the unfashionable sonnet form. For all its irregularity of rhyme-structure, *Calm is all Nature* is a true fourteen-line sonnet; and indeed it is published in volume first of the 1807 *Poems* as the thirteenth of a series of sonnets. The next thing we find is that Wordsworth had laid hold of the almost forgotten works of Anne Finch (1660–1720). Anne Finch was the daughter of Sir William Kingsmill of Sidmonton, Southampton, and married Heneage Finch, who became fourth Earl of Winchilsea.

In one of his famous prefaces Wordsworth proclaims it "remarkable that, excepting the *Nocturnal Reverie* of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of *Paradise Lost*

COTTAGES, HIGH HAWKSHEAD

and the *Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination." Lady Winchilsea made no formal protest against Pope. She used Pope's heroic couplet to the end of her life. Pope wrote to her with affectionate admiration. But Lady Winchilsea was one of these invaluable thinkers who write only to please themselves. Pope and the Classicals addressed external Nature with something of patronage: Nature was a thing upon which the poet would show his dexterity before a *parterre* of connoisseurs, connoisseurs in phraseology. The Countess of Winchilsea loved words as Wordsworth loved the simple daisies, for their delicious modest truthfulness. They appealed to her own essentially unspoiled heart; in the solitude of her garden at evening, with no bevy of experts to astonish, she would learn of Nature, and, reverently thankful, record her feelings in feeling words; hence, truth.

This is Lady Winchilsea's poem, entitled,

A NOCTURNAL REVERIE

"In such a night when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confined,
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings,
Or from some tree, fam'd for the owl's delight,
She, hollowing clear, directs the wanderer right:
In such a night when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heaven's mysterious face;
When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;

When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbine and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes
And chequers still with red the dusky brakes:
When odours which declin'd repelling day,
Thro' temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darken'd groves their softest shadows wear
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient Fabric, awful in repose,
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling hay-cocks thicken up the vale:
When the loos'd horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthen'd shade we fear
'Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear:
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine re-chew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures while tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
'Till the free soul, to a compos'dness charm'd,
Finding the elements of rage disarm'd,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own:—
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks and all 's confused again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renew'd,
Our pleasures, seldom reach'd, again pursued."

Our heart finds rest, and our senses come alive, in reading truthful words like these. This is poetic sense, roused from hushed contemplation—not professional scene-painting to a *parterre*.

Now we turn to young Wordsworth's

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH

Calm is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

The satisfying first phrase, and its true relation to the rest of the picture-making; the "blank of things"; the "memory hushed" (not sought later by the poet); and the last triumphantly perfect line about "the officious touch"—these might well have roused Coleridge to say, as he said of ideas expressed in *There was a Boy:* "If I had met them in the Desert of Arabia I should have instantly screamed out 'Wordsworth!'" But important as is the dignified autobiographical significance of the sonnet, important as is the sustained power of its simple wording in the evolution of the poet's style, important as are the obvious resemblances showing that Lady Winchilsea's *Nocturnal Reverie* was in our poet's recollection, there is yet another matter in this performance to consider. The sonnet is Wordsworth's first essay in landscape; and here we find him struggling with an artistic conundrum. Wordsworth, like so many

of our great poets, had but a poor ear for what is called "a tune"; but he had an exquisitely trained ear for natural sounds. The conundrum was—see the borrowed incident of the horse cropping—how far may a poet be justified in using audition for the rendering of landscape? Is the use of it as false as the placing of a real ticking watch in the clock-face of some architectural picture? In *An Evening Walk* we shall discover the artist to be excessively occupied with this dangerous and fascinating landscape of the ear. The limits to be set for that kind of reproduction of extension in Nature—as distinguished from visual appreciation—cannot perhaps be settled. But the student will find that Wordsworth never again made such profuse appeal to the ear as in *An Evening Walk*, except in that deliberate bravura, *The Power of Sound*. With general regard to Wordsworth's development of landscape, the following sentences are useful for our guidance. They occur in the note prefixed to *An Evening Walk*, about an oak "fronting the bright west." "This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. It was on the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside, and gave me extreme pleasure. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not at that time have been above fourteen years of age."

Having considered such Hawkshead productions

as Wordsworth has left us, we take up the "Matthew" series of poems—poems altogether reminiscent of the poet's schooldays, though written when he had become a man. This group of recollective pieces consists of four poems: *Matthew*, *The Two April Mornings*, *The Fountain*, and the *Address to the Scholars of a Village School*. The *Prelude* alludes also to "Matthew"; in the tenth book of that work (531) details are given of a visit to "Matthew's" grave. It is difficult for us to say why Wordsworth chose to treat this one teacher, Taylor, with a special amount of poetic mystification; yet thus he did treat him. Was he a winebibber, this Rev. William Taylor? Was he whimsical to the verge of irresponsibility? or was he, on the contrary, one who had grave influence over others to prevent flightiness from becoming turpitude? Although in Holy Orders, was he, with witty rhymes, a girder at things ecclesiastical (symbolised in crazed chimings from a belfry)? Was he "diseur de bons mots, mauvais caractère"—a flouter of humanity, at heart? or was his flippancy a cloak for a man possessed of exceptional depth of feeling for humanity? Local history gives us no sign of affection for his memory. There is not a member of his family in the district who possesses a scrap of his writing, a book, or anything else that belonged to him. Wordsworth does deeply interest us in "Matthew," but the impression we receive is of a subjective idea in the poet-pupil's mind—moreover, a composite idea. This is the most shadowy, high-fantastical pedagogue whom we have in poetic literature; a cuckoo pedagogue; a wandering voice.

The most unsophisticated reference to Taylor is

probably that cluster of lines in the *Prelude*, book tenth (548), where Wordsworth says, if he (Taylor) had been alive (1794, the date of writing: Taylor died in 1786) "he would have loved me as one not belying the hope he had formed when I, at his command, began toilfully to spin my earliest songs." We are probably warranted in taking this sentence to mean that, although an usher named Shaw was really the first Hawkshead teacher to draw verses from Wordsworth, Taylor asked for the verses of Commemoration, and otherwise proved the real fosterer of his pupil's imagination. This supposition is borne out, more or less, by all the "Matthew" poems.

The poem actually entitled *Matthew* is prefaced by a prose note from Wordsworth:

"In the School of Hawkshead is a tablet on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite to one of these Names the Author wrote the following lines. Such a tablet as is here spoken of continued to be preserved in Hawkshead School, though the inscriptions were not brought down to our time. This, and other poems connected with Matthew, would not gain by a literal detail of facts. Like the Wanderer in the *Excursion*, this Schoolmaster was made up of several, both of his class and men of other occupations. I do not ask pardon for what there is of untruth in such verses, considered strictly as matters of fact. It is enough, if, being true and consistent in spirit, they move and teach in a manner not unworthy of a Poet's calling."

Now it is hard for us to understand how Wordsworth, who lived at Hawkshead and not in the Forest of Arden, thought of leaving his *Yew Tree Seat* poem on the stone resting-place under the tree, as he says he did; but it is impossible to understand how he

could write these "Matthew" verses opposite the name on the still existing board, or on any such cramped board. Even here there is mystification; "opposite" can be read only as "*à propos*"; unless, as we might come to think, the writer composed his verses while *standing opposite* the list containing the mention of Taylor. If this interpretation of "opposite" be accepted, we must equally interpret "on" as equivalent to "about," in the title to this poem given in the "Contents" of the original 1802 edition: "Lines written on a Tablet in a School." The many freedoms Wordsworth takes with this shadowy schoolmaster, and the significant fact that, while the Latin-teaching usher is respectfully named by his surname of Shaw, Taylor is throughout familiarly addressed by a Christian name, cause us to feel, as a first impression, that Taylor's was a lovable, easy-going nature that courted such affectionate *sans façon* greeting from a favourite elder pupil.

This is the first of the "Matthew" poems:

MATTHEW

If Nature, for a favourite child,
In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed:
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould!
Thou happy Soul! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

This seems to be a faithful portrait. Staring, as it were, at the very inscription of Taylor's name in his own school, the pupil would hardly have allowed himself to import an alien or fictitious character into his verses. We had better suspend judgment for a little. Let us do our best to winnow the other "Matthew" poems. Three of the four poems were written at Goslar, Germany, in 1799, that year of extraordinary frost in which the poet's memories of youth were one by one transmuted with leisurely pains into well-tempered music.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

We walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun,
Then from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

"With rod and line my silent sport
I plied by Derwent's wave,
And, to the churchyard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

"And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

"A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white;
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again;
And did not wish her mine!"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

This—were there no other "Matthew" poems—we might receive as an affecting study of self-intensifying love in a parent for a lost only daughter. In the earliest edition the name of the "Derwent" occurs in the eighth stanza, and it perhaps was thought of, at Goslar, as serving artistry for metre and euphony. Later, the conscience of the artist strikes out "Derwent," substituting no other name. But we are left perplexed by the fact that Hawkshead has practically no trout streams, and certainly not one considerable

stream that would lead an angler to its churchyard: and, by the way, the Derwent at Cockermouth leads to no churchyard. So here we must dwell, as Sir Thomas Browne loved to say, in an adumbration. The Hawkshead Church books bear no trace of the burying of any member or members of the Taylor family—if family there was.

THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

We talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew," said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee:

"No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears.
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me! but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

"Children dead." We must adjust our focus when coming to this poem from *The Two April Mornings*. *The Fountain* is the most profound of the "Matthew" cycle of studies. Many of its thoughts are such as could hardly have entered young Wordsworth's heart unsuggested; life before him, and Dorothy by his side, and Mary blooming at Penrith, it must have been reminiscence of another man's unsuspected passion of grief that we witness here: unless indeed —but this is barely possible— *The Two April Mornings* and *The Fountain* conceal and yet confess a pain connected with "Lucy," "the memory of what has been and never more will be."

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL OF ——

I come, ye little noisy Crew,
Not long your pastime to prevent;
I heard the blessing which to you
Our common Friend and Father sent.
I kissed his cheek before he died;
And when his breath was fled,
I raised, while kneeling by his side,
His hand:—it dropped like lead.

Your hands, dear Little-ones, do all
That can be done, will never fall
Like his till they are dead.
By night or day, blow foul or fair,
Ne'er will the best of all your train
Play with the locks of his white hair,
Or stand between his knees again.

Here did he sit confined for hours;
But he could see the woods and plains,
Could hear the wind and mark the showers
Come streaming down the streaming panes.
Now stretched beneath his grass-green mound
He rests a prisoner of the ground.
He loved the breathing air,
He loved the sun, but if it rise
Or set, to him where now he lies,
Brings not a moment's care.
Alas! what idle words; but take
The Dirge which for our Master's sake
And yours, love prompted me to make.
The rhymes so homely in attire
With learnèd ears may ill agree,
But chanted by your Orphan Quire
Will make a touching melody.

Dirge

Mourn, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone;
Thou Angler, by the silent flood;
And mourn when thou art all alone,
Thou Woodman, in the distant wood!

Thou one blind Sailor, rich in joy
Though blind, thy tunes in sadness hum;
And mourn, thou poor half-witted Boy!
Born deaf, and living deaf and dumb.

Thou drooping sick Man, bless the Guide
Who checked or turned thy headstrong youth,
As he before had sanctified
Thy infancy with heavenly truth.

Ye Striplings, light of heart and gay,
Bold settlers on some foreign shore,
Give, when your thoughts are turned this way,
A sigh to him whom we deplore.

For us who here in funeral strain
With one accord our voices raise,
Let sorrow overcharged with pain
Be lost in thankfulness and praise.

And when our hearts shall feel a sting
From ill we meet or good we miss,
May touches of his memory bring
Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

By the Side of the Grave some Years After

Long time his pulse hath ceased to beat;
But benefits, his gift, we trace—
Expressed in every eye we meet
Round this dear Vale, his native place.

To stately Hall and Cottage rude
Flowed from his life what still they hold,
Light pleasures, every day renewed;
And blessings half a century old.

Oh true of heart, of spirit gay,
Thy faults, where not already gone
From memory, prolong their stay
For charity's sweet sake alone.

Such solace find we for our loss;
And what beyond this thought we crave
Comes in the promise from the Cross,
Shining upon thy happy grave.

Surely sincere words, all these? It can scarcely be that a man would peep and poetise upon his master's grave?

Wordsworth appends to the foregoing *Address* a remark linking it to the subject of the "Matthew"

poems. Why was this Funeral Poem, dated 1798, separated from its companion "Matthew" poems, and kept out of print till 1842?

First, let us set down clearly all that we actually know of the Rev. William Taylor. The present Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, states that Taylor was entered at that college in 1774 as "from Cumberland." Possibly "Cumberland" was a term loosely used as corresponding to what we now term Lakeland. But at any rate we have no facts or hints to indicate that Taylor was a native of the Hawkshead Valley. His being buried at Cartmel Priory, six miles distant from his school, instead of at Hawkshead, and his being described as the son of John Taylor, of Outerthwaite, are inferential evidence against his having been born at Hawkshead. Outerthwaite is part of the Cartmel district. Taylor became head master of Hawkshead School shortly after Edward Christian resigned that post in June of 1782. Taylor's end is set forth in the following epitaph, which may be read to-day on his tombstone in the churchyard of Cartmel Priory:—

"In memory of the Rev. William Taylor, A.M., son of John Taylor of Outerthwaite, who was some years a Fellow of Eman. Coll., Camb., and Master of the Free School at Hawkshead. He departed this life June the 12th, 1786, aged 32 years 2 months and 13 days.

'His merits, stranger, seek not to disclose,
Or draw his Frailties from their dread abode,
There they alike in trembling Hope repose,
The Bosom of his Father and his God.'"

This epitaph and the fact that Taylor died at the early age of thirty-two, having been only four years at Hawkshead School, are quite accordant with the

CARTMEL PRIORY

(Taylor's grave, on extreme left)

single poem called *Matthew*. We have nothing to show, by the way, that Taylor was ever married.

In the tenth book of the Prelude, Wordsworth soberly and accurately describes his only recorded visit to Taylor's grave. The date of the visit is that of Robespierre's death, 1794. There is here no suggestion of any verses having been written by the graveside.

The student of *The Two April Mornings*, *The Fountain*, and *The Address* must confess that although these pieces may contain touches conveyed from the character of Taylor, they contain many more touches that could not possibly fit his age and position. Are we not able to discern in these poems at least two figures apart from Taylor: the personality of an "Original"—an irresponsible commentator on life, stricken in years ("seventy-two"), mellow, rich in leisure; and the personality—in *The Address*—of a village clergyman, a more responsible and conventional man than the "Original"?

The "Original" was probably compounded of two respectable hawkers, who reappear as one figure in the *Excursion*. One of the pedlars was a Scot named James Patrick. After acquiring a modest competence by carrying the pack, he settled down in Kendal. There he married a kinswoman of Mrs. Wordsworth's, and under his roof Sarah Hutchinson spent some years of her youth. Patrick companied with the Kendal Unitarians, at the old Presbyterian meeting-house; and outside of that chapel this mural inscription exists:—

"Near this place are buried John Patrick of Barnard Castle, who died May 10th, 1753, Aged 51 years; Margaret, the

daughter of James and Mary Patrick, who died November 26th, 1767, in her infancy; James Patrick of Kendal, who died March 2nd, 1787, Aged 71 years."

Of this excellent man, with whom Wordsworth sometimes worshipped in the Presbyterian chapel, the poet writes: "My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what Sarah reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious, whether in prose or verse."

But the poet goes on to tell us of a second pedlar, and one who is probably the more intimately connected with *The Two April Mornings* and *The Fountain*. "At Hawkshead also, while I was a schoolboy, there occasionally resided a Packman (the name then generally given to persons of this calling) with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other" (Note to *Excursion*, i. 54).

The *Excursion* passage describes the pedlar as "of reverend age," and proceeds:—

"We were tried Friends: amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My schooltime, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,
And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we rambled through the woods:
We sate—we walked; he pleased me with report

Of things which he had seen; and often touched
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turned inward; or at my request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
How precious when in riper days I learned
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
In the plain presence of his dignity!"

This is surely the character chiefly depicted in *The Two April Mornings* and *The Fountain*. Probably in 1799 Wordsworth was not yet prepared to introduce pedlars into poetry: hence, mystification. Taylor and the Hawkshead pedlar had both been formative in the boy's development: their common influence was idealised as that of "Matthew." But we can discriminate between these two persons without real difficulty.

Now, shall we find in the Hawkshead registers, between 1778 and 1786, mention of any Scots packman, and mention of such a man's daughter dying some thirty years earlier, at the age of nine? The only Scot mentioned in the Hawkshead burial register during Wordsworth's period is entered as follows: "1784 Sept. ye 13th Buried 15th in Chyard aged 79 John, ye Son of David Moore, of Town a Scotchman." Is this the pedlar? He fits into circumstances fairly well. He would be seventy-two or seventy-three when Wordsworth became a schoolboy in the village. The records do not give this man a daughter, but if he were the pedlar, his daughter may have been buried at a point in her father's wanderings when

Hawkshead was not his home. We can only say, John Moore is possibly the pedlar and the "Original" of *The Two April Mornings* and *The Fountain*. The pedlar is probably further referred to in *Expostulation and Reply* and *The Tables Turned*.

But now we come to *An Address to the Scholars of the Village School of* ——. Here we have portrayed an individual not named as "Matthew"; not so young as Taylor, for his locks are white; but again, not corresponding in any way to the irresponsible character of our Scots pedlar. This new personage, whether or not he had any magisterial connection with Hawkshead School, or whether or not the school depicted be that of Hawkshead, is plainly the clergyman of the place, or at least a priest who has been active in the general practice of his calling. He is not named familiarly as the pedlar is in the other poems. Lest the personal description might give offence, Wordsworth does not publish this poem until more than forty years after its composition. The "scholars" are addressed about some one who is not specifically indicated as a *schoolmaster*, although he is spoken of as "our Master" and "our common Friend and Father." This Friend and Father is to be mourned by the distant woodman, the blind sailor, the deaf and dumb half-wit of the village, by the youths who had left the district for foreign shores, and by the drooping sick man who was turned by the hero of the poem in his headstrong youth, as before he had been "sanctified in infancy" by his act or teaching. Such is the tenor of this serious poem about a character totally free from the waywardness of the pedlar. There is an appendix to the poem, written "By the

Side of the Grave some Years After." Now on the only occasion when Wordsworth visited Taylor's grave at Cartmel Priory, he wrote no verses by the grave, so far as record shows (see page 115). In this appendix Wordsworth tells the scholars that although their common friend's pulse has long ceased to beat, the benefits bestowed by him *upon his native vale* can still be traced in the eyes of every inhabitant of that vale. His influence had *for half a century* flowed to cottages and stately hall. Mention of a most charitable sort is made of the friend's imperfections; but the poem ends with the solace that comes in the promise from the Cross shining upon the happy grave.

As we have already noted, this poem is dated "1798." In 1798 Wordsworth was at London, Alfoxden, and Hamburg, not at Hawkshead; "1798" does not even fit the appendix, for the poet's visit to Taylor's grave occurred in 1794. In 1799, when he wrote the other so-called "Matthew" poems, he was at Goslar in Germany. We cannot take it as likely that the *Address* was really written at Hawkshead about a real event of or about 1798-99. It is obvious that the *Address* can by no possibility refer to Taylor's death, for the author speaks to the "little noisy Crew" like an elder returning to them as a visitor; and Taylor died when Wordsworth, in his sixteenth year, was a boy in daily attendance at Hawkshead School. If the poem had been written from facts occurring about 1798–99, the children of Hawkshead School would have known nothing of any Taylor as "common Friend and Father" to them and Wordsworth. Nobody can tell how the date "1798" was assigned to the *Address*. The writer

has seen the original manuscript, bearing the printer's marks: it contains no date. He has seen another draft in manuscript, not dated; and a third, marked "1789" [not 1798]. There exist, in all, four manuscript versions, not one dated 1798, and all four amounting, in their various readings, to cumulative proof that the poet was "hedging" round a theme of real life and social difficulty.

Has the student of Wordsworth's Hawkshead period ever wondered why the poet never refers to the clergyman in describing Hawkshead characters? In these days, the parson had his own inevitable importance in the village; and it happens that the Hawkshead vicar of this time was quite an institution. We may adopt the working hypothesis that the *Address*, however baffling in its allusions, is Wordsworth's tribute to the "Squarson" of the place, Reginald Braithwaite, who was forty-eight years vicar of Hawkshead, and who built the mansion of Belmont, near Borwick Ground and Hawkshead Hall. Wordsworth, having written the poem in sections all much later than 1788 or 1789, kept it out of print for many years lest any line of it might give offence to relatives of the subject. The assigned date is misleading, possibly put in by an amanuensis in error caused by Wordsworth's choosing to link it, in his deliberately mystifying prose note, to *The Fountain*.

It is from a tablet in Hawkshead Church that we gather that Mr. Braithwaite was forty-eight years vicar of Hawkshead. Putting this fact by the side of the excerpts here printed from the Hawkshead burials and birth registers, we see a "white-haired" clergyman between whose knees the village children

might familiarly play; "a common Friend and Father"; spiritual adviser of the village characters; at home in hall or cottage; one—when he died in 1809—who had dispensed spiritual and material benefits for "half a century"; and one to whom this vale was "his native place."

"1737, Regind, Son of Gawen Braithwt, Buried March 7th."

"1769, Reginald Tubman, Eldest Son of the Revd. Reginald Braithwaite, Minister of Hawkshead, Died July 29th, Buried 31st in Church, Aged 16."

"1809, Revd. Reginald Brathwaite [Reginald always signed his name so, but others usually spelt it 'Braithwaite'], Minister of this Church, Departed this life on the 6th day of October, Buried in Church the 11th, Aged 72." [There is actually considerable uncertainty as to whether the burial took place in "church" or in "churchyard."]

For purposes of discretion, Wordsworth, when in 1842 he first published the *Address*, appended these words to the poem: "See upon the subject *The Fountain, &c.*"; and no doubt the parson of the *Address* was also a formative influence in the poet's early life, and therefore could in a remote sense be linked up with the generalised "Matthew." But Wordsworth, to the end, felt personal delicacy with regard to these poems and that note; a delicacy which is connected chiefly with the *Address*.

Let us sum up probabilities. Reginald Braithwaite died in 1809, and probably Wordsworth would go over from Grasmere to attend the death-bed or at any rate the funeral of his old pastor and "master." We know that thirty-two years afterwards, the poet and those who copied out his compositions for him gathered a bundle of MSS. for publication. The poet would be asked to furnish a date for the *Address*. From the evidence of the four existing copies, the only date

assigned by anybody was "1789." There is no proof that Wordsworth visited Hawkshead in 1789; and there is much recorded to make it likely that he did not do so. At any rate, neither Taylor nor Braithwaite died in 1789. The supposition that "1789" refers only to the concluding *By the Side of the Grave Some Years Afterwards* cannot stand, for Wordsworth would not in that year have written such orthodox Christian verses. In the process of making up the 1842 *Poems* for publication, "1789" disappeared from the *Address*, and "1798" took the place of that misleading date. There is no means of telling who put in this second date. It is the figure "9" that seems to have been troubling the minds of those who sought a date for the poem. Both dates, as given to us, are unsatisfactory. Much seems to be cleared up if we conclude that the real date of the *Address* and *Dirge* was that of Braithwaite's death in 1809, and that the rest of the poem was added within the later years of Wordsworth's orthodoxy.

The short and long about the "Matthew" compositions is—these poems are each exquisite; as a group intended to portray one ideal character, they are unacceptable. Given enough time to brood over a character, Wordsworth almost inevitably blended it with other personalities. One hardly knows whether this tendency in him was a merit or a defect. We shall be able to consider the tendency later, in connection with "Michael." So inveterate was the habit, that even the lines Wordsworth wrote in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* present us with a composite, blurred image of himself and Coleridge, clear to no perception except the stereoscopic mind of its creator.

CHAPTER XI

CAMBRIDGE: UNIVERSITY VACATIONS

Thomas Tickell, as Wordsworth himself has remarked, was a man of no common genius, but he chose Kensington Gardens as the subject of a poem, rather than the banks of the Derwent, within a mile or two of which he was born. James Thomson, a man of the North, was earnest enough to please Wordsworth as a master of the poesy of Nature, yet even he smiles aside to us, and tells us that he wishes to pierce Solitude's secret cell in meditation while reclining no farther off from London than under a Norwood oak, with the city's spiry turrets in view to comfort his really "careless eyes."

The very fields of the North had laid such hold on Wordsworth's affection that they were to him (as to Michael) "a pleasurable feeling of blind love, the pleasure which there is in life itself."

Earthlier happy, the poet who was reproached with loving his native regions so that his eyes were averted from half of human fate. Let Wordsworth avert his eyes when and where he chooses: all through his meridian days he averts his gaze to see for us intently and to purify the inmost pulses of our hearts by telling what only he sees. Few greater mistakes could be made, perhaps, than to think that a poet cannot stare out the meaning of human life steadily and as a whole, unless he has seen "all." Milton saw more of men

than Wordsworth: Wordsworth, more of external Nature than Milton. Both of them averted their gaze from much, and were the stronger, within their own powers, for doing this.

In October of 1787 Wordsworth, supported by sums advanced by his uncles and later paid back to them, commenced life at St. John's College, Cambridge. From Hawkshead the change was violent, for when the youth of eighteen came to these streets, his vision was still filled with moor and moorland sheep. Quickly he shrank at the strangeness, the feeling that "he was not for that hour or for that place." He was not fitted indeed for anything but solitude at this period; a solitude he made for himself, without precisely calling it peace. His first biographer aptly quotes a passage from the *Recluse* which explains how "while yet an innocent," Wordsworth breathed "among wild appetites and blind desires and motions of savage instinct that were his delight." The simple school at Hawkshead was then at its highest power for fulfilling the dreams of its founder; it furnished healthy morals, liberal letters, and the *joie de vivre*. From this exceptional home of hearty liberty Wordsworth arrived amid a collection of Dons whom, after eight months' study of them, the undergraduate despised as false to their calling and to the pious spirit of those who founded the college. In mature years Wordsworth revised and regretted his harsh estimate of life at an English university. His counsel, in these later years, was that youth should be religiously possessed with a sense of the powers that wait on knowledge: that universities do moderately enjoy the air of Liberty

and the light of Truth; that a wise undergraduate should master the classical authors before deeming himself fit to gauge the powers of modern writers; and that contempt of authority—however warped that authority might have become by customs glorious in origin—could lead only to "a treasonable growth of indecisive judgments." Even in his early days at St. John's, he had his moods of reverence; reverence for mighty shades in this college like those of Milton and Newton; the hillside sometimes faded from his gaze, and he could not, unmoved, "print ground where the grass had yielded to the steps of generations of illustrious men." This was the greatest gift received by the poet from Cambridge; the sense of needed discipline from the mind of the Past.

So far as positive book-learning went, Wordsworth might almost as well have been at Penrith as in these St. John's rooms above the college kitchens, with Trinity clock by his side to measure the hours of indecision. He had been furnished by Hawkshead School with sufficient geometry and algebra (as well as classics) to enable him to outstrip the freshmen of his year; and so twelve months were gained, as it seemed, for a leisure principally spent in reading Greek and Latin poetry and in learning Italian. The English poets became more and more his companions —Chaucer, for instance, read under the hawthorns at Trompington. There is a little that is amusing, and much that is touching, in the account the lonely student gives of his attachment to an ash tree in St. John's precincts. He dreamed long dreams under this frost-decked tree on winter nights—"scarcely Spenser's self could have had more tranquil visions."

Nothing immediate in the way of poetry sprang from these visions, save the few lines entitled *On the Cam*, and the *Evening Walk*, written and dedicated to Dorothy in 1787–1789, published in 1793, and wholly occupied, not with Cambridge, which it ignores, but with earlier Westmorland experiences. William Wordsworth never tried for Academic honours. With a pass degree, and a mind made up against the Orders for which his guardians had destined him, he left the University in 1791. It is true that the author of the *Prelude*, in late years of his life, supported college routine as against desultory study; but then he was advising young undergraduates who were not poets. A young man with the makings of a great poet in him visits a university as a judge of appeal quite as much as he moves through it a learner. Probably Wordsworth knew better than any Dons did what was good for his temper of thought. He claims that at least his own plans of study at Cambridge increased his original strength of contemplation, and deepened his intuitions for the highest truths. What more could be desired for a "maker"? Dorothy wrote of her brother Christopher, at Cambridge in 1793: "He is not so ardent in any of his pursuits as William is, but he is yet particularly attached to the same pursuits which have so irresistible an influence over William, and deprive him of the power of chaining his attention to others discordant to his feelings." Christopher did eventually learn to chain his powers to things as they came —some, doubtless, discordant—and died Master of Trinity and pastor of Buxted. William did not learn thus to chain his attention, being William, but he

gained a cure all of his own, in which he remains for ever a sure shepherd of souls on the mountain tops of beauty.

It is our business here to deal, not with the Cambridge life of the poet, but with some of the Northern vacation rambles which diversified that existence.

The first of these breathing-times came in the summer's Long Vacation of 1788. It was not to his much-loved sister that he homed his way. Home, to him, was Hawkshead. To see the same moorlands, fish in the same lake, sleep in the accustomed bed at dear Dame Tyson's—this was the breath of life the Cambridge recluse had felt he needed most:

> "When from our better selves we have too long
> Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop
> Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
> How gracious and benign is Solitude!"
>
> —*Prelude*, iv. 345.

One likes to think of the undergraduate swinging along the road from Kendal (iv. 10), past Crook and the Quakers' Meeting House, to the point a little lower where he could in his man's voice attempt the shrill ferry-cry of the Hawkshead schoolboys. From the Furness side, George Braithwaite the ferryman heard and recognised the summons; boat and boatman were ready for the wayfarer when he reached the hither brink of the regal mere. Almost the first welcome the traveller received at Hawkshead was from a dog. In the later days of his school existence the boy, retiring from sport like a sick lover, had struck up a friendship of loneliness with a cur able to divine that he needed loving and watching. At times when poetic ecstasy hastened the pace of the

youth and loosened the excited tongue, the dog walked on ahead. Should any wayfarer then approach from the other direction, the dog barked a warning to his adopted master, lest the stranger might be allowed to share the dog's impression that a man who talked to himself like this must be crazy. No sooner had the glad visitor from Cambridge caused his step to echo in the cobbled alleys of Hawkshead again than the terrier appeared and immediately assumed his former duty of adjutant or sentinel. The young man strayed round Esthwaite, and "his soul put off her evil, naked as in the presence of God." He now moved overpowered with the conviction that man, living within the light of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad influences that cannot fail. In the village he marked the deserted sunny nook where some old labourer used to sit eking out his pulseless days; he marked the plain girls grown pretty women, and the former pretty girls, plain. With a new eye he contemplated his friend the forester, and the shepherd on the hills, as well as the village wiseacres. Probably Daniel was dead, the aged culprit so gently described in *The Two Thieves* that Charles Lamb always cried when he read the poem.

But the chief delight was to company again with good Anne Tyson. Specially of a Sunday was her "boy-back-again" proud of her—a gentle, greyhaired dame, yet moving gallantly like a swash-buckler cavalier, as she strode churchward equipped in almost monumental trim, bonnet and cloak of stiff velvet. Later in the day she would address to her loved colleger words of pious counsel, with her finger on the Holy Book. When the homilist fell back nodding,

in the afternoon's heat, her charge laid the big Bible under her head for a pillow. Anne's was "a clear but shallow stream of Sunday piety." In earlier years she had been in domestic service with a Coniston ironmaster named Knott, and her garrulity regarding Mr. Knott's fine estates in Scotland is mentioned with affectionate amusement in Dorothy's *Scottish Tour*. The dame lived to welcome yet again her fondly remembered pupil when he was a father, accompanied by his son John. This last visit was received at Colthouse, near Hawkshead, a village where Anne died in May of 1796. Her body lies in Hawkshead churchyard. Upon the grave of this good creature faithful Wordsworth's thoughts "fell like dew."

In reminiscences of boyhood and youth at Hawkshead, Wordsworth gives no token of what many folk call religious experience. Church prayers, Sunday school, sermons, choir, do not exist in his expressed memory. Christian dogmatics, even the person and name of Jesus, are equally passed by. In book fifth of the *Prelude* there is indeed an obscure and laboured passage which may be read as rendering homage to early lessons of piety, but which ends with the characteristic statement—it need not be gainsaid —that "we," the poets, are to be hallowed only less than Nature herself or God's pure word miraculously revealed. But enough has already been chronicled here to show that Wordsworth was, in his own mystical way, a prophet consecrated and religiously possessed.

Early days of doubtless innocuous Fell-side junketings caused compunction. The gawds, the games, and the swarm of heady schemes, Wordsworth considered, had conspired to lure his mind from habitual

quest of "feeding" pleasure. Many of us will rather feel comforted to realise that the seer was not without some nights and days of youth when whim was in the ascendant and merriment declined to be barred out. No! The austere priest of Nature deems that still more of solitariness should have been his while he grew up at Hawkshead. Trivial pleasures were a poor exchange for books and the ever-surprising loveliness of earth. On this first return from Cambridge there came to the student a consecration clearer than that which reaches most poets. In one of the valley farms (*Prelude*, iv. 310) Wordsworth had spent the entire night dancing with the girls, under the benignant sanction of assembled age. The cock had crowed. The rising sun made all too clear the invitation of the homeward path cleaving the copse. The sea lay laughing in the distance. From the vaporous meadows and the dale of song-birds rose to the empyrean the solid mountains drenched in gold, brighter than the clouds above them. The heart of the arrested reveller was full to the brim. Leaving the farmhouse, he made no vows: but vows were made for him; he walked on, that morning, in a new blessedness that was never quite to leave him, "a dedicated spirit, else sinning greatly."

On page 389 of the third volume of Knight's latest (Macmillan) edition of the *Poems,* a note is made of the various theories as to the crag on which Wordsworth thus received his consecration. In spite of all these ingenious conjectures the student—who must wait for a day of clear weather for the journey—is advised to set out from Hawkshead market square, past the school to Hannakin Corner, thence turning to

the right up Grisdale Hill, following the road till beyond a post-box he finds an iron gate on the left, through which he will make his way, thereafter pursuing a track over the heather to the highest peak of the moorland crowned with a flagstaff, and known as Sans Kĕldin. There he will gaze upon a view entirely corresponding to all the circumstances, a panorama stretching east over Yorkshire, south over Morecambe Bay, west over Coniston to the Cumberland coast, and north to Helvellyn and Skiddaw. Local feeling is now firm in considering that Sans Keldin was the platform whence Wordsworth surveyed that morning's "memorable pomp."

The exquisite *Prelude* incident summarised on the previous page is followed by a sombre encounter, towards the end of the holiday, with a cast-off soldier, one moonlight night, on the hilly ridge between the two Sawreys—an encounter that shows the poet learning to value unbreathing Nature much, and breathing Endurance more. We shall be in error if we do not realise how thorough is the poet's confession that both of these lessons were gradually borne in upon a mind that by native constitution valued only subjective feeling. In the eighth book of the *Prelude* (300) this unbosoming is made, and apparently with reminiscence of existence at Anne Tyson's cottage. The poet expresses a thankfulness that he grew up preserved from the restraint of over-watchful eyes, guarded from too early intercourse with the deformities of crowded life and the ensuing laughters and contempts which no one should permit to himself who considers man's dignity and destiny. "Yet, Friend," Wordsworth proceeds (340), "deem not that

humanity thus early took a pre-eminent place in my mind. Nature herself, at this unripe time, was but secondary to my own pursuits and animal activities and all their trivial pleasures. When these had drooped and gradually expired, Nature, prized for her own sake, became a joy—and onwards, through late youth, until not less than twenty-two summers had been told." [This would be at Blois in France.] "Man was subordinate in my interest to the visible forms and viewless agencies of Nature. She was a passion to me: Man was an occasional delight, an accidental grace: his hour had not yet come."

Here let us pause in our chronicle to interpose a reflection. It is only after experience in revolutionary France that our author will fully yield his mind to the supreme interest of studying Man. In the Cockermouth references throughout the poetry, we hear, as it were, an æolian harp attuning itself to catch the breeze. In the passage just paraphrased and in such another passage as the incident of the Ulverston Sands given on page 86, the harp is content to feel its music; at length the music becomes interpretative of external Nature; and ultimately the harp sinks—not exultingly, quite—into the function of bearing up upon its harmonies the lyric cry of man. To apprehend these early stages of our poet's development helps our understanding of the great *Ode on Immortality*, which is so largely a poem of landscape, after all is said. This question remains—Did Wordsworth, boy and youth, neglect Man for Nature because he had never awaked to curiosity about Man? That can hardly be. It is rather to be credited that the lot of William and Dorothy and their brothers had not

inspired them with reverence for their "betters," and neither in actuality, at Cockermouth, Penrith, Hawkshead, Cambridge—nor in the mouldering monuments of the past, nor in reading of history, had William Wordsworth stumbled upon what would call forth from him such a sense of authority as he found, first, in self-wonder, and, secondly, in communings with extra-human nature. Even when the Cumbrian poet arrives at the point where he bows to learn of Man, this Man is not the hero of history, but a shepherd sort, a peasant, passing his existence almost under the same laws of stern simplicity that develop the mystery of mountains. The eighth book of the *Prelude* (293) is again our instructor here :—

"Call ye these appearances
Which I beheld of shepherds in my youth,
This sanctity of Nature given to man,
A shadow, a delusion? Ye who pore
On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things;
Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
Instinct with vital functions, but a block
Or waxen image which yourselves have made,
And ye adore! But blessèd be the God
Of Nature and of Man that this was so;
That men before my inexperienced eyes
Did first present themselves thus purified,
Removed, and to a distance that was fit:
And so we all of us in some degree
Are led to knowledge, wheresoever led,
And howsoever; were it otherwise,
And we found evil fast as we find good
In our first years, or think that it is found,
How could the innocent heart bear up and live!
But doubly fortunate my lot; not here
Alone, that something of a better life
Perhaps was round me than it is the privilege
Of most to move in, but that first I looked
At man through objects that were great or fair."

Wordsworth's first Vacation, as we review it, is seen to be his return to the elementals needful for his spiritual life. The entire holiday was spent at Hawkshead, except for a day or two in London ere Cambridge life was resumed. Hills and rivers and the free air that the bees love had renovated his being. Consecration had touched him to the quick. He was feeling towards the Odes. *Descriptive Sketches* and *An Evening Walk* would emerge as a result earlier than the Odes. Portions, indeed, of the *Evening Walk* were committed to writing ere the poet left Furness. Its embryo lines were still further back in conception, having been conned over at Cambridge in the winter nights when the student stood by the hour in the shadow of the frosted ash, gazing through its tasselled branches at the stars and making believe to himself that he was under the Hawkshead sky.

The Long Vacation of the subsequent year, 1789, was given to the companionship of Dorothy, his sister, and Mary Hutchinson, at Penrith. Before or during this holiday, the *Evening Walk* was finished. Arriving at Penrith by a circuitous route through the valley of Dove and Yorkshire, Wordsworth haunted the Beacon and roamed the country around it, full of a poet's quest of material. The twin-minded brother and sister sauntered in Brougham Castle at early morning and by evening light, venturing sometimes on the perilous towers now forbidden to visitors —nesting themselves at other hours on these airy peaks of ruddy masonry to enjoy the motion of the breeze in tufts of crannied grass or harebells, while the plains below sweltered in midday heat; or through some crumbling window gathering "with one mind" the

rich reward of turret-climbers in the retreating landscape. The surmise is pleasant and natural that this landscape would not be the Border slopes but rather the hills of Skiddaw range barring the gazers from Cockermouth and far-away Hawkshead. Nor is another surmise unwarrantable—that the poet, between the dear silences of hearts at one, would roll out lines descriptive of this very land on the horizon, from the poem now completed and copied out, and already dedicated in manuscript to that helpmeet sister restored to the author after such absence that she seemed "a gift then first bestowed." Whether he then spoke of a boy's dream that was to come true just beyond those hills, we are forbidden to do more than hope. The retrospective "Recluse" fragment (not published till 1888) begins by telling how a roving schoolboy, on holiday, came to the verge of a mountain ridge, whence, looking down, he sighed and said, "What fortune to live here—or here, even, to die!" That "calmest, fairest spot on earth, with all its unappropriated good," was to become his own —not merely his own but the bower for "a younger Orphan of a home extinct." This was Grasmere: Dorothy at Grasmere.

Penrith itself had few attractions for these children of nature. No town life at any time attracted them. Their lot at Cockermouth, to admit the truth, had been nominally existence in a town, but with the freedom of river, meadow, and mountainward paths at the very garden-gate. For the noisier, larger market centre where lived the grandparents, Dorothy gives us the feeling of brother and sister on a page of the *Tour in Scotland*: "We were glad to leave Dum-

fries, which is no agreeable place to them who do not love the bustle of a town that seems to be rising up to wealth. We could think of little else but poor Burns, and his moving about on that unpoetic ground." And yet Dumfries had lying all round it not a little of the feudal romance in stone that attracted Wordsworth so feebly, and his sister—so far as her writings guide us—not at all.

It is scarcely possible that brother and sister, in these days of renewed communion, did not discuss poetic plans. What could these plans be? No better conjecture can be offered than that they may have coincided with the project of works set forth in the first book of the *Prelude*. Dorothy was perhaps also invited by her brother to discuss style as well as subject, in literature, for the sixth book of the *Prelude* (105) leads us to this period as one in which the poet was advancing toward his doctrine of speech as simple expression rather than as "diction":—

> "My inner judgment
> Not seldom differed from my taste in books,
> As if it appertained to another mind,
> And yet the books which then I valued most
> Are dearest to me *now;* for, having scanned,
> Not heedlessly, the laws, and watched the forms
> Of Nature, in that knowledge I possessed
> A standard, often usefully applied,
> Even when unconsciously, to things removed
> From a familiar sympathy.—In fine,
> I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
> Misled in estimating words, not only
> By common inexperience of youth,
> But by the trade in classic niceties,
> The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase
> From languages that want the living voice
> To carry meaning to the natural heart;
> To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
> What reason, what simplicity and sense."

In this period of the student's second Long Vacation, we see brother and sister wrapt in a mutual love that was never for an instant of their lives broken. No doubt Dorothy deserves the greater share of credit for this continuity of sympathy. William not only received the affections of those around him, but used them for poetry, as Goethe did, albeit Goethe carried out the manufacture in a manner which cannot be laid to the charge of his British brother. It seems true to say that Dorothy was the predominant partner in this compact of affection, and yet it is clear enough that William did show for her, perhaps especially in his youth, steadfast and reverent love. It is but a year or two after this Long Vacation that Wordsworth writes thus to his sister: "Oh, my dear, dear sister! with what transport shall I again meet you! with what rapture shall I again wear out the day in your sight! . . . I see you in a moment running, or rather flying, to my arms."

Nevertheless, "Another maid there was." Before we consider this other maid, it may be well that we should acknowledge an absence, in Wordsworth's personal life, of love for woman as the master passion. Here, perhaps, he stands with Milton, girt by impenetrable austerities of intellect and spirit. Wordsworth worshipped in his intimate heart no Laura or Beatrice or Highland Mary; but thrice, at least—nay, we will say, four times—he has gone near to plumbing poetically the depths of man's love for woman. The first case in which he greatly moves us with this theme is to be found in the group of "Lucy" poems. These poems were written in Germany at that deliberately constructive period when Wordsworth

searched through his experiences and recollections for matter fit to be made into verse. Short, profound, the "Lucy" poems will be discovered by analysis to be curiously abstract. Their words present us with a spirit rather than with any body which we may compare with the sweethearts of other poets. Whoever the human original for "Lucy" may have been—if there was any original (and the reticence of all the Wordsworths on this matter pricks our curiosity)—one is compelled to the conclusion that the poet at Goslar, rubbing his chilly hands over his writings in that year of abnormal frost, was determinedly a composer, a maker, a seizer of themes which he transmuted and rearranged. The Goslar habit of mind is explained to us in the Fenwick note to a "Poem of Childhood" not ranked by the commentators in the "Lucy" group, although the title happens to be *Lucy Gray, or Solitude.* Wordsworth had been told of a little girl who fell into a Yorkshire canal during a snowstorm. This is the whole genesis of *Lucy Gray*—nothing from his own life, but a mere bit of hearsay connected with one of the last things easy for imagination to deal with, a ditch of water for carrying coals. What does Wordsworth reveal to us about his fashioning of this poem? Here is his exposition of his methods at Goslar: "The way in which the incident was treated, and the spiritualising of the character, might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences which I have endeavoured to throw over common life, with Crabbe's matter-of-fact style of handling subjects of the same kind. This is not spoken to his disparagement, far from it, but to direct the attention of thoughtful readers into whose hands these notes may

fall, to a comparison that may enlarge the circle of their sensibilities, and tend to produce in them a catholic judgment." Now, sooth to tell, the ballad of *Lucy Gray* is a little too long; it does not sustain itself at an even height of inspiration. But if any reader will eviscerate this ballad, and put together the first three and the last two quatrains, he will have before him a poem precisely of the quality which we find in the true "Lucy" group. Let us see:

"Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind."

Here we have a lyric which, though it be as abstract as the accepted "Lucy" poems, yet moves us with the same force that they contain. Had Wordsworth presented us with *Lucy Gray* in this

form, we should have been eager to find a child-original for it in his own circle of experience—a needless quest, since the whole lyric is evolved from a girl, unknown to the poet, who fell into a canal. The example proves that, for all we know, Wordsworth at Goslar marvellously evolved the accepted group of "Lucy" poems from a basis of fact just as minute. Nevertheless Lucy and Wordsworth's feeling for Lucy remain at least as high in the poetic firmament as Burns's Mary and Burns's affection for that immortal beauty.

It is possible, then, that Lucy is a mere figment of imagination, or was some slight crumb of human character highly poetised. It is understood that the Wordsworth family—reticent by mere habit, in face of innuendoes made long ago by Miss Martineau—possesses no record or hint about an original for Lucy, and sees no reason to suppose that any serious affair gave rise to these poems of highly spiritualised passion. But there is another case in which Wordsworth seizes a subject and raises it aloft in the realms of love-expression, and here at any rate the delight comes from no empty vision. Touring through Scotland with Dorothy in August of 1803—an epoch when the flame of imagination was burning in him brightly—Wordsworth met two Highland girls by Loch Lomond. Dorothy here exhibited her usual function, and prepared the way for poetry in her brother by first falling in love with these girls herself. She writes: "One of the girls was exceedingly beautiful; and the figures of both of them, in grey plaids falling to their feet, their faces only being uncovered, excited our attention before we

spoke to them; but they answered us so sweetly that we were quite delighted, at the same time that they stared at us with an innocent look of wonder. I think I never heard the English language sound more sweetly than from the mouth of the elder of these girls, while she stood at the gate answering our inquiries, her face flushed with the rain; her pronunciation was clear and distinct, without difficulty, yet slow, as if like a foreign speech." In William Wordsworth's mind one of these graceful, softly-speaking Gaels emerged as *The Highland Girl;* and twenty years after the writing of that poem, Wordsworth remarked, "Approaching the close of my seventy-third year, I have a most vivid remembrance of her, and the beautiful objects with which she was surrounded." In the concluding portion of *The Three Cottage Girls*, we are again presented to this lass of Inversnaid, with the same magic—magic such that the few lines forming these two pieces by the English artist impress us with a divinity of breathing beauty at once more simple and more queenly than Walter Scott's figure of Ellen, though the whole cumulative force of his *Lady of the Lake* is bent to produce an ideal maid.

In "Lucy," then, and in the "Highland Girl," Wordsworth has borne himself as a great poet and a gentleman of perfect chivalry. Purer love and deeper respect for woman's loveliness can hardly be found in literature.

The third instance in which Wordsworth touches us to the quick of sympathy regarding man's passion for woman is the thirteenth of the "Poems founded on the Affections"—*'Tis said that some have died for love.* There are phrases here that are the sublime

of anguish. The fourth case is formed by that perfectly balanced tribute to Womanhood, *She was a Phantom of Delight*, a production of composite emotions; for while the poet, not without some obscurity in the dedication, gave forth this picture as representing his own wife, he has informed us that the opening of the poem—and therefore the germ of it—arose in his mind while he contemplated in vision the girl of Inversnaid.

So much for the poet's reverent enjoyment of woman's beauty and power, as they may be passed through imagination. For the real woman of his life, we have to be content with affection less glowing. At Penrith, when William and Dorothy attended Dame Birkett's school, a certain John Hutchinson traded as a tobacconist. No doubt, as tobacco was then an expensive luxury, a tobacconist would be reckoned to hold a high position in the town's commerce. Hutchinson did not belong to a Cumberland stock; the roots of his family history lay about Newcastle and Durham. Not prominent as a townsman, and only once mentioned in the public records of town life, John Hutchinson, a bachelor, married Mary Monkhouse, a spinster, in the Penrith parish church on the ninth day of February 1768. He died aged fifty on the 19th of May 1785, and Mary his wife, daughter of John Monkhouse of Penrith, departed this life on the 31st of March 1783, aged thirty-eight years. The family tombstone can be seen near the parish church on the right hand of the main door as one leaves the building; and it is figured in the foreground of one of our pictures. John and Mary Hutchinson had eight children. The church books

record that Sarah, their daughter, saw the light on the 20th of June 1775 (a date different from that given on the lady's tomb at Grasmere); and her sister Joanna was born on the twenty-fifth of November 1780. Of the eight Hutchinson children, the only one whose birth is not registered in the parish books is Mary, so we have to trust the Wordsworths, who did not excel in accuracy about dates, for the statement that Mary was born in 1770 at Penrith. In conversation with an American gentleman called Inman, William Wordsworth remarked that he became acquainted with Mary Hutchinson when she was three years of age. A little later he and his sister found themselves her companions at Dame Birkett's school. For the rest of their lives these three beings were intertwined in affections and interests. Sarah and Mary and Joanna Hutchinson were girls of native sense, pure in every fibre of the mind, strong as pure, not highly educated, as the world counts education, but furnished with wholesome zests, tact, and good humour; all three able to tolerate William Wordsworth's peculiarities, all three his devoted friends as long as they lived. "Another maid there was"; so begins that passage in the sixth book of the *Prelude* (224), which leads us from the poet's communion with Dorothy to the expression of his love for Mary Hutchinson, love declared during William's second Long Vacation.

"Another maid there was, who also shed
A gladness o'er that season, then to me,
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endeared;
That other spirit, Coleridge! who is now

So near to us, that meek confiding heart,
So reverenced by us both. O'er paths and fields
In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes
Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,
And o'er the Border Beacon, and the waste
Of naked pools, and common crags that lay
Exposed on the bare fell, were scattered love,
The spirit of pleasure, and youth's golden gleam."

It is at this point, then, in his evolution, the period of his engagement to wise and good Mary Hutchinson, that William Wordsworth for the first time is able to look from Penrith Beacon upon his inheritance, Inglewood, the land of northern romance, with eyes undimmed by sadness. The Beacon and its story had hitherto stood for much that was melancholy, and he had already in his heart renounced that Beacon and its surroundings of suggestion. Now the Beacon becomes luminant to him, not with romance of Eld, but with present love for a woman, a woman who shall be carried away from this renounced inheritance, and cared for in a bower of the other Land, the longed-for Land of consecration and the poet's dream.

MOUNTAINS OF LAKELAND, SEEN FROM BROUGHAM CASTLE

CHAPTER XII

WORDSWORTH'S FIRST RENDERING OF LAKELAND SCENERY

LIKE a stranger-swan taking the water for the first time, upon some Mere theretofore unruffled by any royal bird, our poet breaks into possession of Lakeland with his earliest avowed production, *An Evening Walk.* It was issued through Johnson, Cowper's London publisher, in 1793, and we have seen that the composition was prepared in 1787–89. No manuscript of this poem exists, but one suspects that the human episode was added in, about 1792 or 1793, just at the dawn of the French war which drew the poet's thoughts so much to the wives and widows of soldiers. To Professor Knight all lovers of Wordsworth are so much indebted that one feels almost guilty of ingratitude in differing from his experienced judgment about any particular. He says: "There was little in *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*—in the form in which they first appeared—to lead to the belief that an original poet had arisen in England." Too crowded with uninterrupted landscape effects though *An Evening Walk* be, it is newly and nobly true to the country of Wordsworth's youth. It is here maintained that the innate truthfulness of poetic insight marking the first edition of *An Evening Walk* deserves, even more than the occasional power of the first edition of *Descriptive Sketches*, such eulogy as

Coleridge accorded to this latter work: "Seldom, if ever, was the emergence of a great original poetic genius above the horizon more evidently announced." The verse-structure of *An Evening Walk* is that of pentameters rhymed in couplets—the structure which Goldsmith and Thomson transferred to the study of country subjects from Pope's city-reared poesy. Possibly Professor Knight and others have considered that the singing quality of this early poem of Wordsworth's is but low, and no doubt the reader of the *Walk* does fret at the constant suggestion of Goldsmith's medium of expression. But the content of *An Evening Walk*—the material—remains an astonishing landmark in letters. That this is so, will probably be admitted by those who care to dwell upon our next few pages, in which, for the sake of gaining an unembarrassed consideration of the poet's subject-matter, an attempt has been made to render the poem in a close paraphrase of prose. An unimportant introduction to the poem is not here represented. The descriptions in the *Walk* seem to deal chiefly with the Windermere region.

When the wan moon, in the south, is brooding, and deep-embattled clouds are spotting the northern cliffs, the herds, shortened in the water, gaze at the tempting, unattainable shade cast by a barren wall and stakes stretching far into the lake. Schoolboys, prone upon the ground, or humming in sport around the elm, form a glimmering picture. In the brown park, flocks and troubled deer shake twinkling tail and glancing ear. Thirsty horses, from the unshaded "intake" on the hill, gaze at the flood, and in dumb

distress mark the passing labourer, and strain with their necks at the gate he closes behind him, watching him wistfully till his path dips into the river shadows. The spirit of quiet leads us up a huddling stream that with water-breaks brightens a sombre gill. Above, thick branches close over the wild waves seeking rest in their brown bason, while shrubs and rock-moss and pale wood-weeds grow downwards to them. High over all, subtle sunbeams fleck withered briars that fringe the crags. Save this, the only light admitted here is a small cascade illuminating with sparkling froth a gloom like that of twilight. [In various editions Wordsworth works fondly over this idea.] A grey bridge lies hidden among the ivy. [A prose note tells that the scene is to be found at the lower waterfall of Rydal Hall gardens.]

The eye roams to cliffs across which, half-way up, the silvery kite wheels on whistling wing. Slanting watery lights, falling from parting clouds, travel swiftly along the base of the precipice, cheering its naked waste of scattered shingle and grass lichens and scanty moss. Scarce can the thistle there grow its beard, or the foxglove peep. [This is right "Wordsworth": a landscape-artist's eye for an effect beyond paint]. All day long the stone-chat, bird of deserts, makes itself heard. Potters can be descried goading their panniered train up the steep mountain tracks. The peasant launches himself from the cliff's edge in his sled, cleaving a headlong pathway. The lonely mountain horse catches the westering rays as it browses amid purple heath and "rings of green" and broom. In contrast to the idle mountain steed, downward thunders the timber

waggon with its team slackened and confounded by the sharp slope. The flocks, still in the light, feed on by the sheltering cross-shaped walls, giving no thought to winter's blast. Lightly down-leaping the rill dashes with song over the rough rock. Three humble bells ring out their rustic chime from the lonely chapel: the hammering of boat-builders rises from the lake; and, more remote, the quarry blasts can be heard.

Even here, where endless woods sweep round the blue pomp of lakes, cliffs, and falling cataracts, the simplest sights and sounds of mountain farms give cheer: as, for instance, the cock with tail feathers unfurling and furling like a stately canopy over his royal brow; he stands a-tiptoe, to shrill from his clarion throat among his sister-wives, and is faintly threatened by the far-off answering farms.

We love to watch the processions glistening under the pines and yews that overhang the great Quarry; the panniered dwarf horses, the men, the wains. How busy that enormous hive, in which Echo plays with varied noise! Some toil in profound gulfs, looking like pigmies, the clink of their chisels hardly heard. Some, dimly to be descried, between aerial cliffs walk viewless planks; and others, again, are hanging in dizzy baskets before the ceaselessly ringing rocks of pale blue, glad to work, and to sing at their work.

Now, impending on a cloud above a cliff that flames a-top, the broadening sun appears, its orb divided by a long blue bar. It touches presently the purple crag that flings its shadow on the pictured lake. On the other side rise cliffs, and they too,

with towers and woods, furnish a prospect all on fire. The deeper fissures still shower purple through the fainter gold; each speck of turf between the rocks becomes green-gold, and the sun's rays penetrate the central gloom of the forest to pick out with yellow, here and there, a bole or two. In the valley, the shepherd waves his hat. He is directing his winding dog that, barking busily among the glittering cliffs, hunts, by direction, the intercepted flocks. Through the oaks overhanging the road, radiance shoots along the tawny earth, wild weeds, twisted roots; the Druid temple lights itself up; all the bubbling brooks turn to liquid gold. Lessened to a curve, the day-star sparkles once, and sinks behind the hill.

In these lonely valleys—if the silver-haired sages of the hamlets may be trusted—this is the time when, light retreating, up the hills strange apparitions mock rustic beholders.

Lo! a figure of despair, spurring his steed with violence along the midway cliffs. Unhurt he pursues a flight prolonged amid the gazes that at every moment expect his fall. Now a gorgeous show of shadowy horsemen moves about the hillsides, the van oft-gilded by the evening's ray while the rear gleams sullenly through iron-brown. The silent admiring crowd in the valley stands till the pageant gradually loses itself, crossing the mountain-tops, and the solitary beacon tips his spiry head with the last glow of sunlight.

While the solemn evening shadows sail down the valley on slow-moving pinions, and the oak fronts the bright west with strong lines of darkening bough

and foliage, it is delightful to stay beside the glowing lake, where along its secret bays coils the road, past the tumbling wood-rills running in transport to the dimpling deeps: delightful to watch the winding swan pursued along the meandering shore by obsequious Grace. He swells his lifted chest, flinging backward his bridling neck between towering wings. With proud stateliness he divides the waters and surveys them in glorious mastery; and even as he floats along, the silvered waters light up, proud of the varying arch and the moveless, snowy form. The female swan follows, meeker in her charms, busy with domestic cares and affections, furtively eyeing and attending her lord, the while her little brown ones swim by her side, nibbling the water-lilies as they pass. The mother, in her cares, forgets to be proud of her beauty. Herself unweariedly alert, she calls them to her in turn and bids them rest their wearied feet by mounting on her back to nestle in the embraces of her mantling wings.

Long may ye roam these hermit waves, hidden in clefts at the foot of the birch-besprinkled crags! Long may ye haunt these fairy holms of Winander that, untrodden, silent, green, protect with shadow the hidden wave! Violets and lily-of-the-valley waft their fragrance over the evening waters from yonder islet, which, though her far-off twilight ditty steals to it, never has felt the trip of harmless milkmaid's feet.

Yonder tuft conceals your home, your bower, with its floor of fresh water-rushes: its walls are of the long grass and the willow, the tall poplar swinging aloft over it. Issuing thence, unwieldily stalking, ye crush your flowery walk with broad black feet.

ISLANDS OF WINDERMERE

At breezy morn ye can hear, as from a door, the hound, the tramping horse, and the mellow horn: in peace ye may lave your lithe necks in their own reflections mingled with the visual stirring of the green lake-bottom. Never ruder sound reaches your abode than dashing of the stormy wave or wind tossing the trees in the shadow of which ye rest. Ye never, like hapless human vagrants, throw your young on winter's winding-sheet of snow!

Fair cygnet, caressed by all a mother's joy, perhaps some wretch, watching thee, has called thee blest! Some human mother, faint and conquered by the breathless summer heat, has dragged her babes thus far, while arrowy fires shot through her and extorted fevered groans. With joints locked by fatigue, she painfully steps out again, backward-gazing. Scarce has she left her seat than she feels strengthless to teach her little ones to struggle a few short loaded steps along the burning path. She shakes her numbed and slumbering arm, and raises eyes through tears to the unshaded height of the mountain. She calls to her soldier husband—lying asleep far off on Minden's charnel field. She bids him share her woes! But why wistfully gaze into Hope's deserted well? The pathway is choked, and the pitcher is shattered. [A passage to be noted as later enlarged for *Margaret.*] See her now, on cold blue nights, denied shelter in hut or straw-built shed, point out a shooting star in the sky, to turn the sleepy cry of her children into a silent smile. Her eldest grief, marking from the forest's depth the staring moon, lifts his hand Heavenward with a prayer-like motion, and demands if his far-off father can also see that good and kindly star.

Ah me! There is as little light in the grave as there is between moon and moon. [A thought seemingly suggested in part by Gray's Journal: "dark interlunar cave."]

Often, when the low-hung clouds hide the summer stars, and the valleys show no sign of fire, the mother, couched where the brook brawls beside the painful road under the bat-haunted ash-trees, will forget the chilling dews and the distant clock, while she watches smiles coming to her children's faces through the dusk, and they delightedly play in her lap with the harmless glow-worm, tossed from hand to hand, many other circlets of green radiance gleaming the while upon the ground.

Oh! when bitter showers assail her steps and the storm blast descends through the hills like a torrent, the mother's breath no longer suffices to thaw the children's fingers; their frozen arms are able no longer to clasp her neck. Their chattering lips, scarce heard, spread chill upon her shoulder: to her cold back their still colder bosoms send a shudder. Blindly she wanders through the unlit heath. She is led by the dank hand of Fear, and dogged by Death. She turns her neck for the last kiss; but with angry shriek Death breaks off the kiss. She has dimly descried a roofless stone. Despairingly halting by it, she snatches her babes from her shoulder and clasps them. "Now, relentless Tempest, shoot thine arrows, and fall, Fire! But let us perish heart to heart!" Weak roof to shield two babes—a cowering form! Faint fire to warm—a dying heart! Fond Mother, press the kiss! Vain the dread that thy flooded cheek will wet them with its tears! Soon shall the Lightning hold his torch to show the little ones coffined in thine arms.

Sweet is the mingling of sounds coming from far, along calm lakes, when the folding star peeps, the duck dabbling in the rustling sedge, the feeding pike starting up to the surface near the shore, the reed-stirring swan wetting the bill that drips still on the still water; the heron shooting upward with out-stretched neck, because the trodden shore resounds. While such a tranquillity sinks into the breast, there is nothing to disturb the tides of sleep—unless it be the char vaulting for the mayfly, breaking the mirror-surface into a circle of depths—or the beetle, blindly borne against the traveller and dropping at his feet, its droning horn hushed.

[Now follows what is probably the most extended perspective of the absolute ear ever attempted by Wordsworth or any other writer. It was obliterated from every edition but the first. Why? Because of its hints of Gray and Goldsmith and Dr. Brown? Rather, mayhap, because the theme is overwrought, in the artist's opinion, the ear not being naturally fitted to convey landscape into words, unaided. Even a blind man would agree, here. So many distinctive sounds would fight against each other as noises.]

The waggoner whistles as he plods his ringing way beside his slow-winding cart; flocks of twittering swallows make a sigh in the air; the curfew swings long and deep: the talking boat ["Wordsworth," this!] moves pensively, or drops anchor down with profound plunge. Faint uproar comes from distant boys bathing, and from the restless piper-bird wearying out the shore. These sounds all swell the murmur of the village, descending softened, from the water-head. As the last bleat dies off in the fold, the

minstrels of the haunted hill tune up, in the mountain dells, their water harps.

With religious awe, departing day blends with night's solemn colours. Amid groves of clouds that crest the brow of the mountains and throw their shadows about the west, Una-like shining in her gloomy way, comes the half-seen form of Twilight. The shadowy streams repose in the dark steeps, but the dawning moonlight casts hoary gleams and longer streaks of fairy radiance along the lake, and the creeping lustre tracks the fitful breeze.

Restless magic, it all is. What is bright breaks upon the shadowed; shade invades light: fair spirits are abroad, brushing lucid wands in sport along the face of the waters, while music, stealing round the glimmering deeps, charms the tall circle of the enchanted hills. As the music ascends through the astonished woods, the mountain streams suspend their rising song. [Near approach to "Pathetic Fallacy," but permissible here. Note how, from the first, Wordsworth's instinct avoided this error.] Below evening's listening star the sheep-walk grows still, on the attentive hills. The milkmaid forgets her ballad, and the low murmur of her pail ceases from the breathless valley. No night duck clamours for his wandering mate, for even the birds remain in awe while the Genii hold here their pomp. But lo! the pomp is fled! the wonderful music is mute, and no wrack of the pageant remains.

So vanish human joys, fair shadows, and Death only can destroy the vain regret we feel for them. Night, meanwhile unheeded, has stolen over the vale; so baffled, on dark Earth, is the failing, weary

eye, that it turns gladly to rest on any star that peeps. The lone black fir, last lingerer of the forest train, fades out of the valley; the cottage smoke, closing sight of evening, as it greyly glimmers, at last loses itself in the deepening gloom. But now upon the black wall-like steeps, at different heights, gleamings restlessly sparkle red—the cottage candles by the cascades. Nothing of man's life or any other life remains to call back the mind wandering to other worlds; it is the night-calm come, that presently will be broken by strains of the solemn night-bird. We feel twilight sympathetically steal slowly through our heart; the longer we muse, the more the soft shade deepens on the tranquil mind. Stay, sadly pleasing visions! Ah, no! As the valley fades from vision, they fade. Yet still remains in the mind the tender vacant sadness, and still remains on the cold cheek its shuddering tear.

The bird that, with fading light, ceased his silent threading of the hedges or the steaming river bed, will from its reappearing tower anon greet with bodings the rising moon, that will with its hoar light turn the ground to a pearly frost, and will pour deeper blues to the verge of Ether, rejoicing to marshal her pomp of cloud in robes of azure and gold and fleecy white, while, as the glow-worm fades, with a paler red the thicket-shadows are spangled by rose and poppy. Now the moon rises over the eastern hill where darkness still broods on vanished trees and dells and lawns. In silence she lifts up her lovely face, flinging her light across the glooms of the valley to the western slopes white with hamlets revealed beside their woods chequered with summer's green corn turned to autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, pouring from her heavenly horn a dawn lovelier than the Moon's, vainly, as she mounts, strives to cheer the near hills, black, weary, impervious; yet undaunted, she throws her tempting smile to further darling spots. For me, even now, she furnishes a distant scene, lovingly gilding that cottage that is the sole wish, sole bourne of my way. How fair its lawns and silvery woods appear! How sweet is its murmuring stream! There, my Friend [Dorothy] we shall rise to golden days, fulfilling our small share of painful sighs (for sighs will ever trouble human breath) till we creep hushed into Death's tranquil bosom. [A passage doing honour to fraternal love; and touching amid so many promising signs of majestic empery in Nature, for its modesty. But the diction here distinctly droops, as if Wordsworth had language of his own, already, for observation, but not yet for speculation.]

Now the clear Moon is at her zenith and the plains are speckless in rimy radiance. Scarce a shadow hides the deepest dells in the mountain; faint silver threads outline the hills from the dark blue, answered by the blue tide below. Silver wreaths of charcoal-smoke steal down over the ruins of the fallen wood, and spread along the lake. They waken the scene, but do not break its peace.

[From "Mountain streams" onward, the ideas are partly taken from Brown.]

Mountain streams unheard by day, now only faintly heard, beguile my homeward path. Atmosphere and sleeping lake listen in quiet for the aerial music of the hill, broken only by the deep strokes of the slow clock, or the shout for the sleeping ferryman,

followed later by his hollow-parting oar, while echoed hoofs approach on the further strand. Sounds, over the water, the gate closing and, hurrying through the rustled corn, the hare arrested at his meal; the complaining owl's tremulous sob; at long intervals the mill-dog's howl; the distant forge's profound swinging thump, or the yell of lonely hound in the wood.

Overloaded with close observation though the *Walk* be, it is a wonderful collection of delicate materials for poesy. That it was "young" work is obvious; but it is intense, and it is true in insight, and it is new in purpose. What the mature artist can accomplish in landscape with a twentieth part of such materials may be seen in Milton's *Penseroso* or in our own poet's *Tintern Abbey*. Be it remarked that the *Penseroso*, like Wordsworth's *Evening Walk*, is full of ear-observations; about twenty may be distinguished in its compass of one hundred and seventy-six lines. But Wordsworth, reaching the year of *Tintern* (1798), put such restraint upon his auditory sensibility and imagination, that in the whole of this poem—one hundred and sixty lines—there are only three appeals to the ear. How exquisitely are they placed, and how perfect is the wording of them!—the "sweet inland murmur" of the Wye above the tide limit, "the sounding cataract haunting like a passion," and "the still, sad music of humanity"!

The Mastery of Beauty no doubt belongs largely to the domain of the sub-conscious. Coinciding pretty closely with Talma's definition of art ("Feeling, past through Memory, and fixed in Form"), Wordsworth's matured appreciation of poesy became "Emotion

recollected in tranquillity." This will not fit *An Evening Walk*, for there in every line a sensitive observer, brooding in no abstract tranquillity, is keenly cataloguing Nature's charms. Now no critic could lead us from the bright promise of *An Evening Walk* further into the mystery of mastery, as revealed in poems like *Tintern Abbey*, than Wordsworth himself. Aubrey de Vere has left us the following memorandum:

"I was once on a visit to Wordsworth (to have slept under his roof I regard as the greatest honour of my life) and we had a conversation about the different modern poets who had in late years described Nature. He expressed a low opinion as to their success in description. He took down several volumes, and he said, 'Here is a descriptive passage by ——. It is exceedingly able writing, but it is not Nature. It is undoubtedly clever, but it is the writing of a person who vainly endeavours to blend together as much as he sees, whether congruous or incongruous, into a single picture. This is the way in which he did his work. He used to go out with a pencil and a tablet, and note what struck him, thus: "an old tower," "a dashing stream," "a green slope," and make a picture out of it.' Then, turning to me, the old Poet added, with a flashing eye, 'But Nature does not allow an inventory to be made of her charms! He should have left his pencil behind, and gone forth in a meditative spirit; and, on a later day, he should have embodied in verse not all that he had noted but what he best remembered of the scene; and he would have then presented us with *its soul*, and not with the mere visual aspects of it."

CHAPTER XIII

WINDY BROW (KESWICK)

THE whole Wordsworth family agreed that the *Evening Walk* was a splendid sackful of poetic material, rather than a finished poem. In regard to this piece and its companion, *Descriptive Sketches*, Dorothy writes: "Their faults are what the suggestions of a friend would easily have made him see. . . . It is, however, an error he will never fall into again. . . . My brother Kit and I amused ourselves by analysing every line, and prepared a very bulky criticism."

In 1790 Wordsworth, with staff and bundle, set off on a walking tour through France and Switzerland, in the company of his college friend, William Jones, landing at Calais on the very eve of the day on which the Trees of Liberty were planted all over revolutionary France. The *Prelude* informs us that the young poet was then little moved by the moral ferment of the French nation.

In 1791, as we have already noted, Wordsworth graduated. With no prospects except the career of a clergyman, which advising relatives pressed upon his unwilling mind, he occupied himself in finishing the *Sketches* and planning the poem called *Guilt and Sorrow*.

In 1793 William Calvert, a son of Raisley Calvert of Wharton Hall, and seemingly a nephew of George Calvert, agent for the Duke of Norfolk's estate of

Greystoke, near Penrith, invited Wordsworth to be his fellow-traveller in an expedition to the south of England. William Calvert, from what the Wordsworth letters hint, was impulsive and self-wrapped. A carriage accident occurring on the tour, Calvert mounted a horse and rode home to the north. Wordsworth was left to proceed as a pedestrian to Stonehenge and Tintern and Jones's dwelling in the Vale of Clwyd. Everywhere he was dreaming of a simple life with Dorothy. He writes about his friend's Welsh abode: "The house is quite a cottage, just such an one as would suit us." Dorothy sends letters to her friends detailing her waking dreams of the Parsonage in which William and she are to be happy, when he has bowed under the yoke of Orders. Yet she thinks he might do well as a tutor of boys, without becoming a clergyman. She records that William is unfortunately out of favour with nearly all his relatives. As for Orders, William had at last come to the point of accepting a Curacy at Harwich, but he was found to be under the requisite age for presentation.

Next year (1794) is epochal in the lives of William and Dorothy, and brings us back for a time to Wordsworthshire. Here before us, with Wordsworth's signature on the fly-leaf, lies William Mason's poem of 1803 on *The English Garden.* Book third of the *Garden* opens with an imaginary speech uttered to Mason by his deceased friend, Thomas Gray:

> "'Why waste thy numbers on a trivial art,
> That ill can mimic even the humblest charms
> Of all majestic Nature?' At the word
> His eye would glisten, and his accents glow

With all the poet's frenzy, 'Sov'reign queen!
Behold, and tremble! while thou view'st her state
Thron'd on the heights of Skiddaw; call thy art
To build her such a throne; that art will sink
To its primæval nothing. Trace her march
Amid the purple crags of Borrowdale;
And try like those to pile thy range of rock
In rude tumultuous chaos. See! she mounts
Her Naiad car, and, down Ladore's dread cliff
Falls many a fathom with the headlong stream;
Falls like the bard my fabling fancy hurl'd
From the rough brow that frown'd o'er Conway's flood;
Yet not like him, to plunge in endless night;
For, on its boiling bosom, still she guides
Her buoyant shell, and leads the wave along,
Or spreads it broad, a river, or a lake,
As suits her sov'reign pleasure; will thy song
E'er brace the sinews of enervate art
To such dread daring?'"

It was just this bracing of the sinews to some such dread daring that lay before Wordsworth as his task, shadowed forth in *An Evening Walk*. Glimpses of the training for that life of high endeavour, and glimpses of the absurd misgivings of relatives regarding the plain living and high thinking of the brother and sister, are set forth in three missives from Dorothy, terse, right-minded, noble.

From the first of these letters we learn that William and Dorothy, arriving at Kendal from Halifax, walked to Grasmere (did they wistfully look at cottages to let?) and from Grasmere to Keswick, and there they took up their abode at a house called Windy Brow, on the northern bank of the Greta, under Latrigg. Windy Brow, or rather part of it, formed an occasional retreat of William Calvert's; the property was in the permanent possession of a "statesman."

Again Dorothy takes up the pen to convey to Miss Pollard these chronicles from Windy Brow:

"You cannot conceive anything more delightful than the situation of this house. It stands upon the top of a very steep bank, which rises in a direction nearly perpendicular from a dashing stream below.

"From the window of the room where I write, I have a prospect of the road winding along the opposite banks of this river, of a part of the lake of Keswick and the town, and towering above the town a woody steep of a very considerable height, whose summit is a long range of silver rocks. This is the view from the house; a hundred yards above, it is impossible to describe its grandeur. There is a natural terrace along the side of the mountain, which shelters Windy Brow, whence we command a view of the whole Vale of Keswick (the Vale of Elysium, as Mr. Gray calls it). This vale is terminated at one end by a huge pile of grand mountains, in whose lap the lovely lake of Derwent is placed; at the other end by the lake of Bassenthwaite, on one side of which Skiddaw towers sublime, and on the other a range of mountains, not of equal size, but of much grandeur; and the middle part of the vale is of beautiful cultivated grounds, interspersed with cottages, and watered by a winding stream which runs between the lakes of Derwent and Bassenthwaite.

"I have never been more delighted with the manners of any people than of the family under whose roof I am at present. They are the most honest, cleanly, sensible people I ever saw in their rank of life, and I think I may safely affirm, happier than anybody I know. They are contented with a supply of the bare necessaries of life, are active and industrious, and declare with simple frankness, unmixed with ostentation, that they prefer their cottage at Windy Brow to any of the showy edifices in the neighbourhood, and they believe that there is not to be found in the whole vale a happier family than they are. They are fond of reading, and reason not indifferently on what they read. We have a neat parlour to ourselves, which Mr. Calvert has fitted up for his own use, and the lodging rooms are very comfortable.

"Till my brother gets some employment he will lodge here. Mr. Calvert is not now at Windy Brow, as you will suppose. We please ourselves in calculating from our present expenses for how very small a sum we could live. We find our own

food. Our breakfast and supper are of milk, and our dinner chiefly of potatoes, and we drink no tea."

Mrs. Crackanthorpe of Newbiggin Hall objects to Dorothy's trudgings and to her picking up strange acquaintances; and the expenses likely to be incurred by the wanderers form one of her chief reasons for remonstrance! Dorothy replies to her aunt:

"I am much obliged to you for the frankness with which you have expressed your sentiments upon my conduct, and am at the same time extremely sorry that you should think it so severely to be condemned. As you have not sufficiently developed the reasons of your censure, I have endeavoured to discover them; and I confess no other possible objections against my continuing here a few weeks longer suggest themselves, except the expense, and that you may suppose me to be in an unprotected situation. As to the former of these objections I reply that I drink no tea, that my supper and breakfast are of bread and milk, and my dinner chiefly of potatoes from choice. In answer to the second of these suggestions, namely that I may be supposed to be in an unprotected situation, I affirm that I consider the character and virtues of my brother as a sufficient protection; and besides I am convinced that there is no place in the world in which a good and virtuous young woman would be more likely to continue good and virtuous than under the roof of these honest, worthy, uncorrupted people; so that any guardianship beyond theirs I should think altogether unnecessary. I cannot pass unnoticed that part of your letter in which you speak of my 'rambling about the country on foot.' So far from considering this as a matter of condemnation, I rather thought it would have given my friends pleasure to hear that I had courage to make use of the strength with which nature has endowed me, when it not only procured me infinitely more pleasure than I should have received from sitting in a post-chaise, but was also the means of saving me at least thirty shillings. . . .

"I am now twenty-two years of age, and such have been the circumstances of my life that I may be said to have enjoyed William's company only for a very few months. An opportunity now presents itself of obtaining this satisfaction, an opportunity which I could not see pass from me without un-

speakable pain. Besides, I not only derive much pleasure but much improvement from my brother's society. I have regained all the knowledge I had of the French language some years ago, and have added considerably to it. I have now begun Italian, of which I expect to have soon gained a sufficient knowledge to receive much entertainment and advantage from it."

—Knight's *Letters of the Wordsworth Family* (i. pp. 62–3).

"Windy Brow"! The modern mansion of the distinguished family of Spedding enjoys that title, on a spot near the early nesting-place of the Wordsworths; but the original farmhouse has disappeared. Apparently it was under the roof of this farmhouse that William Calvert introduced Dorothy and William to his delicate younger brother Raisley. Raisley quickly fell into keen sympathy with William's aims. From the *Letters*, vol. i. page 73, we learn that Raisley offered a share of his modest income to the poet, who was meanwhile despatching fiery republican letters to London friends. "I see no connection between reason and the sword. . . . I disapprove of monarchical and aristocratical governments, however modified. Hereditary distinctions, and privileged orders of every species, I think must necessarily counteract the progress of human improvement; hence it follows that I am not amongst the admirers of the British Constitution."

The tenth book of the *Prelude* tells us much about the wanderings and speculations of Wordsworth at this period—the visit to Taylor's grave, for instance, and the arresting incident (553) on Ulverston Sands. In these days one of the main tracks from the south into Furness and what we now call Lakeland proceeded by Lancaster, across a great treacherous bight, from Hest Bank through a wide arm of Morecambe

Bay to Cartmel, and from Cartmel across a narrower arm of the bay to Ulverston. West's book gives the mileage thus: Lancaster to Hest Bank, 3; Hest Bank to Carterhouse (over sands), 9; Carterhouse to Cartmel, 2; Cartmel to Holkergate, 2; Holkergate to Ulverston (over sands), 4. Travellers made these passages at low tide, under the care of official guides provided by authority. The guides had each day to institute fresh surveys of the ever-shifting sandbanks. As many as one hundred gigs, chariots, and single horsemen would on one trip follow such a leader: it was like the people of Israel crossing the Red Sea. Wordsworth, having quitted Taylor's grave at Cartmel, was one morning traversing a portion of these sands on foot, on his way back to Keswick by Ulverston, when the foremost traveller in a caravan bound from Hest Bank cried to him, "Robespierre is dead!"

"The day deserves
A separate record. Over the smooth sands
Of Leven's ample estuary lay
My journey, and beneath a genial sun,
With distant prospect among gleams of sky
And clouds, and intermingling mountain-tops,
In one inseparable glory clad,
Creatures of one ethereal substance met
In consistory, like a diadem
Or crown of burning seraphs as they sit
In the empyrean. Underneath that pomp
Celestial, lay unseen the pastoral vales
Among whose happy fields I had grown up
From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle,
That neither passed away nor changed, I gazed
Enrapt; but brightest things are wont to draw
Sad opposites out of the inner heart,
As even their pensive influence drew from mine.
How could it otherwise? for not in vain

That very morning had I turned aside
To seek the ground where, 'mid a throng of graves,
An honoured teacher of my youth was laid.

"As I advanced, all that I saw or felt
Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
And rocky island near, a fragment stood
(Itself like a sea rock) the low remains
(With shells encrusted, dark with briny weeds)
Of a dilapidated structure, once
A Romish chapel, where the vested priest
Said matins at the hour that suited those
Who crossed the sands with ebb of morning tide.
Not far from that still ruin all the plain
Lay spotted with a variegated crowd
Of vehicles and travellers, horse and foot,
Wading beneath the conduct of their guide
In loose procession through the shallow stream
Of inland waters; the great sea meanwhile
Heaved at safe distance, far retired. I paused,
Longing for skill to paint a scene so bright
And cheerful, but the foremost of the band
As he approached, no salutation given
In the familiar language of the day,
Cried, 'Robespierre is dead!'—nor was a doubt,
After strict question, left within my mind
That he and his supporters all were fallen.

"Great was my transport, deep my gratitude
To everlasting Justice, by this fiat
Made manifest. 'Come now, ye golden times,'
Said I forth-pouring on those open sands
A hymn of triumph: 'as the morning comes
From out the bosom of the night, come ye:
Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
They who with clumsy desperation brought
A river of Blood, and preached that nothing else
Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the might
Of their own helper have been swept away;
Their madness stands declared and visible;
Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and earth
March firmly towards righteousness and peace.'—
Then schemes I framed more calmly, when and how

ULVERSTON SANDS

The madding factions might be tranquillised,
And how through hardships manifold and long
The glorious renovation would proceed.
Thus interrupted by uneasy bursts
Of exultation, I pursued my way
Along that very shore which I had skimmed
In former days, when—spurring from the Vale
Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's mouldering fane,
And the stone abbot, after circuit made
In wantonness of heart, a joyous band
Of schoolboys hastening to their distant home
Along the margin of the moonlight sea—
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand."

The incident thus recorded must have occurred in August. The "Romish chapel" would be on what we still know as Chapel Island in the Leven estuary.

Raisley Calvert had entered on a decline, and grew daily worse. In October, Wordsworth wrote to William Calvert for money to provide for his being able to accompany the sick man to Lisbon. In the same letter he expressed a hope that William would not grudge his inheritance from Raisley being docked by £600, a sum Raisley destined for Wordsworth, on condition that the £600 was not to be impinged upon by any claims put forward by the poet's guardians. Neither Calvert nor Wordsworth undertook the Lisbon voyage. Wordsworth nursed the consumptive in his last days at the Robin Hood Inn, Penrith, and Raisley Calvert was buried in Greystoke churchyard, January 12, 1795, aged twenty-one. His will proved that he had left not £600 but £900 to Wordsworth. Seldom, perhaps never, has so wise a generosity been evinced by a youth, or has such a legacy been more fruitfully used.

Wordsworth's verse-acknowledgments of his benefactor's providential care are to be found in the fourteenth book of the *Prelude* and in the Sonnet beginning with that benefactor's surname. Such acknowledgments are difficult to achieve in the right key; and Wordsworth's nature was not one to find the difficulty less than his fellows would have felt it.

> "If in freedom I have loved the truth;
> If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
> In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
> Of higher mood, which now I meditate;
> It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
> To think how much of this will be thy praise."

> "Himself no Poet, yet
> Far less a common follower of the world . . .
> He cleared a passage for me, and the stream
> Flowed in the bent of Nature."

The name, the lovely and significant situation, the affecting circumstances in which the Wordsworths reached it—surely these render "Windy Brow" a place to be remembered with exquisite reverence in the history of English literature! Dorothy, at Windy Brow, looking from what to her are magic casements, finds her sisterly heart full. "I am now twenty-two years of age, and such have been the circumstances of my life that I may be said to have enjoyed my brother's company only for a very few months." "William has a sort of violence of affection, if I may so term it, which demonstrates itself every moment of the day, in a thousand almost imperceptible attentions . . . a sort of restless watchfulness which I know not how to describe, a tenderness that never sleeps,

and at the same time such a delicacy of manners as I have observed in few men" (*Letters*, vol. i. p. 48).

"We have been endeared to each other by early misfortune. We in the same moment lost a father, a mother, a home. We have been equally deprived of our patrimony. These afflictions have all contributed to unite us closer by the bonds of affection, notwithstanding we have been compelled to spend our youth far asunder" (page 49). Granted that brother William was outwardly without grace! "He is certainly rather plain" (page 52). . . . "Ah! I never thought of the cold when he was with me. . . . I am very sure that love will never bind me closer to any human being than friendship binds me . . . to William, my earliest and my dearest male friend" (page 55).

Here, first, Dorothy enjoys something of a home with that dear one. Dove Cottage can be fully understood only by those familiar with the expressed longings of years that reach their earliest gratification for the orphans at Windy Brow. Here first Dorothy is permitted to watch her brother assuming the very function she had assigned to him in a quotation from Beattie's *Minstrel*:—

> "And oft he traced the uplands to survey,
> When o'er the sky advanced the kindred dawn,
> The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
> And lake dim-gleaming on the dusky lawn,
> Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn."

At Windy Brow Dorothy's staunchness aids her brother to resist the family pressure towards Orders. Here she watches the "bracing up" of the poet's fibres. Here, in the Calverts, she notes the earliest gush of sympathetic acclaim from comparative

strangers. Here first does Dorothy make herself clear to us—at the very gate of Threlkeld valley, school of the shepherd lord—as living out with her brother, no otherwise than they both lived them out afterwards in Eight-Pounds-a-Year Dove Cottage, the courageous joys of high-bred poverty.

CHAPTER XIV

WITH COLERIDGE

What is the next clear vision we have of Wordsworth's "exquisite sister"? It occurs in the year 1797. Along with Samuel Coleridge, her brother William, and Cottle the publisher, Dorothy one day arrived in a gig from Bristol at a farm where the merry-making party were to dine. The four had stopped to parley with a beggar, who apparently rewarded their interest in him by stealing cheese from their vehicle. When they reached their destination none of the four travellers could remove the horse's collar, though Coleridge was an ex-dragoon. The lonely wench who acted as caretaker of the place stepped out from the kitchen with a "La, master, you should do like this!" and she turned the collar round, slipping it off in an instant. Then the company sat down to a meal intended to consist of a butterless loaf and a bottle of brandy; but the brandy was accidentally spilt.

The bread and the brave brandy—"brandy for heroes!"—are types of the existence of Wordsworth and his friends at this period. The poet was living at Alfoxden, Somersetshire, whither he had been attracted by Coleridge's presence, after nearly two years of anxious obscurity with Dorothy at Racedown, not far away. At Racedown Wordsworth composed his tedious drama, *The Borderers*, and

The Old Cumberland Beggar, as true and moving a picture of a Lakeland character as he ever achieved. This was a memory from the Cockermouth days.

At Alfoxden Wordsworth led his life so waywardly, and in such strange republican company—the demagogue John Thelwall being the political stalwart or scapegrace in the midst of that group—that Government sent down a spy to watch these admirers of revolutionary France, who in the long-run were to return to political bread without any thimblefuls of heady political brandy.

See these intellectual gipsies of Alfoxden—Coleridge and Wordsworth, with Dorothy—set out on a week's walking tour, at half-past four on a dark and cloudy afternoon of November! Some poem that may be written by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and may be accepted by the editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, is to pay the expenses of this trip! During the first eight miles in the dark, the two poets throw open to each other their chambers of imagery, to plan the bill-defraying poem. The result is *The Ancient Mariner*, and a further result will be the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, a volume in which the two poets put forth their power to excite the sympathy of readers by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and their power to give the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. Wordsworth takes up themes of daily life to show within them charms equal to the interests evoked by the supernatural. Coleridge bends himself to give abnormal romance the impressiveness of reality. These two great minds are cousinly, like bee and moth. Both are needed, to flit over the

garden of English poesy. Wordsworth is the mountain bee. Coleridge, in his duskier atmosphere, is the moth. Science tells us that the moth fertilises flowers as widely as the bee does. Wordsworth's gift is exquisite sense of things as they are, and their significance to the moral soul of man. Coleridge's gift is an ethereal witchery whereinto he transmutes experience of the senses through imagination disembodied from contact with sober consciousness. For Coleridge, poetic truth depended on the powers of human fantasy. He is thunderstruck, and for a time like one new-born, when Wordsworth displays external Nature as ruling by a categorical imperative all its own. We may see something like Wordsworth's impression of Nature received by Coleridge subjectively and transmuted into phantasy—turned inside out—in these lines of *The Ancient Mariner* about the souls singing round the ship's mast:—

"Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky,
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning.

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

Here we perceive traces from a youth of sense-communion with Nature as keen as Wordsworth's had been. But Coleridge's imagination is inductive from Nature towards pure fantasy. Wordsworth's imagination was more submissive towards Nature, though not more artistic; it deduced in terms of didacticism. Nature and the Moth revealed a new moonlight to English poetry. Nature and the Mountain-bee revealed a sunny sustenance awaiting daylight's tasks of insight willed and fulfilled.

One fancies that Dorothy during these eight miles of tramping through the Dorset darkness, on that famous November evening, for once questioned whether the Moth might not prove itself more daring of wing than the Bee. But Dorothy it was, not Coleridge, who in that time of sifting proved most necessary to William her brother.

The Alfoxden episode lasted from July of 1797 to June of 1798. In that year, as we have noted already, *Lyrical Ballads* appeared, and the few who bought copies rather laughed at the work than tried to understand its two voices. *The Ancient Mariner* moved nobody: Southey was the only reviewer who perceived the grandeur of *Tintern Abbey.*

In September of 1798 Coleridge accompanied Wordsworth and his sister to Germany, but he soon left them for courses of his own; and William and

Dorothy found shelter at little cost in the mediæval town of Goslar. Thus—Coleridge's influence much in abeyance, and Dorothy's wholly English spirit disenfranchised for the time being—our poet "passed through memory and fixed in form" composite emotions derived from study of certain human themes suggested by his earlier days. This was distinctly an era for him at which mind was to work on types of humanity rather than on manifestations from nature external to humanity. The "Lucy" group of poems and the "Matthew" group belong to Goslar. To Goslar also we owe the "glad preamble" for the *Prelude* that was poured out for Coleridge in February 1799. In December of that year William and Dorothy Wordsworth settled at Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

CHAPTER XV

THE DALESMEN

He who desires to find to-day anything in Lakeland reproducing the qualities of humanity so agreeable to William and Dorothy Wordsworth must abandon the beaten tracks. He must linger at the entrance of some valley until the hum of towns and the crackle of coach wheels have disappeared from the ear's consciousness. And then he must loiter for weeks at least in that single valley, to become attempered to its atmosphere. The courtesy of the Dalesfolk will come out to him at once, but he must wait for their confidence, and wait longer still for their sympathy. First, he will mark a quality of Suspense in the landscape. Many of the homes seem poised in the air. Secondly, he will mark Truce. Nature and Man do not ask too much of each other. Each remains free. Thirdly, he will become conscious of Equality among men. There are no palaces in any of these glens; no castles; no cathedrals; even church spires are snuffed out of this kind of landscape. Then comes a sense of strong Silence. Also, Timelessness breathes through that silence. The valley folk are unhurried; their chronology is that of the unwearied seasons. Something of a Songlessness there is, furthermore. The very birds are not lavish of their music. Could they be so, where trees are sparse? However, it is the songlessness of the people that most impresses

the mind. The milkmaid seldom carols, as the ploughman usually gets along without whistling. The Reserve of the Dalesmen will only grow upon the visitor, as he stays among them. It belongs to their Isolation. They do not live in England. They live in Westmorland or Cumberland.

Such are the impressions that an average Englishman will receive from Lakeland if he proceed slowly and gently in quest of the little that remains of the old life, uncontaminated by modern influences from the towns.

The mind of young Wordsworth first of all reacted against feudalism. Next, it went through three years of protest, much of it captious, against the dead hand of university authority. At the revolutionary flames of France he warmed his hands and felt a brief exultancy, but that firelight faded into the common light of day. And just about then it happened that William and Dorothy Wordsworth, who had ever a Quaker strain in their souls, threw in their lot with Nature's Quakers—these Dalesfolk, simple amid freedom, socially content in communal life, satisfied with the theology of a God above and Judgment to come.

The Dalesfolk were well worth finding out. Wordsworth divined them better than they have ever understood him. He consecrated himself to Lakeland as Burns may be said to have expressed himself on behalf of the Scottish Lowlands. To-day the peasantry of Scotland adore Burns. But how do the peasantry of Westmorland and Cumberland regard Wordsworth? As a mass, they do not regard him at all. The blame is not wholly Wordsworth's. His

mediums of vaticination often vibrated in notes too high or too low for the common scale of hearing. Deeply as he reverenced his neighbours, he stood aloof from them, and so their descendants stand aloof from him. No one will maintain that Walter Scott, intellectual giant though he was, expressed that depth of insight into childhood which Wordsworth has revealed to us in his best poems. When Scott visited Mrs. James Hogg's cottage for a chat and laid his hands on the head of one of the children with a "God bless you, my dear," and departed, the mother burst into weeping, only because he had not so blessed all her little ones. There was not this reciprocity of ordinary kindliness between Lakelanders and their great poet. Unmatched devotion was his as he offered it to them and their country, but it was the offering of a lonely idealist rather than of a cheering neighbour, and it has been chiefly the rest of the world that has by reverence been attracted to that message. The mass of Dalesfolk still live Wordsworthless. The message has gone over their heads.

Let us turn to study these still admirable Lakelanders.

It is clear that the yeoman proprietors of Cumberland and Westmorland, commonly called "Statesmen," acquired their little landed properties just as the squatters in Australia have entered into their possessions. That is to say, they either settled upon absolutely unclaimed land or drove out the primitive holders. The first proof of this is, that Dale property has nearly always been held by customary tenure, not by the copyhold tenure which derives its validity only from rolls made up by a

A "STATESMAN'S" HOME, WINSTER

steward of some manor-lord. Secondly, some of these customary freeholds have been held uninterruptedly in the same families from the time of Richard II. The Holmeses of Mardale are descended from John Holmes, a Norwegian who settled in Lincolnshire in 1060 and afterwards removed to Mardale. No Norman feudal lord could then have held sway over John Holmes. Thirdly, there is the negative evidence that Domesday Book does not mention Cumberland or Westmorland. Fourthly, when James I. came to the throne of England, he set up a claim to all the small properties of Cumberland and Westmorland on the exclusive plea that the Statesmen had been always and merely tenants of the Crown. It does one good to hear that this plea roused the dwellers in these peaceful valleys. Two hundred of them met at Rather Heath, between Kendal and Staveley. Their leader was one Brunskill. They issued a declaration that "They had won their lands by the sword and were able to defend them by the same." Until Wordsworth's time the Statesmen, under what may be described as a film of manorial suzerainty, retained their paternal freeholds.

These little properties—often called tenements—were more numerous in Stuart times than they were at the end of last century. Queen Catharine, wife of Charles II., held seventy-four customary tenements in Grasmere. In Wordsworth's period at Grasmere this number fell to twenty-six: in 1829 the number had fallen to twelve. The poet Gray thus described the Grasmere community: "Not a single red tile, no gentleman's flaring house or garden

breaks in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest and most becoming attire." Wordsworth uses like terms of admiration for this "perfect republic of shepherds and agriculturists," among whom the plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or the occasional accommodation of his neighbour. The chapel was the only outstanding building. The well-to-do Statesman would own about twenty head of cattle and eighty or one hundred sheep. Occupied in cultivating his rebellious paternal meads and pasturing his equally rebellious Herdwick flock upon a range of unfenced fells shared by a score or two of farmers, he was content if he could make ends meet so as to pass on his domain to his son. The storms of one year on such a range of hills as we have mentioned might cost the group of farmers fifteen hundred sheep. On the other hand, the free flocks on the wild fells cost almost nothing to feed. In such circumstances a Statesman just held his own on an average of seasons. Truth and honesty breathed through all these valleys. "Go," said a Statesman in 1800 to Richard Warner, who was wandering through the land, "Go to the dale on the other side of the mountain and tell So-and-so you came from me. I know him not, but he will receive you kindly, for our sheep mingle upon the mountains." Nature's Quakers, we have called these hardy Dalesmen. "Two things have I required of Thee, deny me them not before I die. Remove me far from vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny Thee and say Who is the Lord? or

lest I be poor and steal." Lakeland and Arcadia have had much in godly common. In these communities most of the estates were so small that they did not provide continuous farm work for the Statesman and his family; so carding, spinning, and weaving were adopted as winter employment. The men carded and the women spun the wool. On the larger estates, the junior member of the family would weave at the household loom. In other cases, the loom would be idle until the yearly return of an itinerant weaver. The linsey-woolsey dresses of the women were home-spun, and a coarse linen was manufactured from native-grown flax—or sometimes from hemp—for the under-clothing of women and the shirts of men. The overplus of cloth and yarn was considerable, and found its way to Kendal and Keswick and Penrith. Until the looms of Yorkshire and Lancashire destroyed the trade, Kendal exported to America large consignments of coarse woollens. The ancient and famous Kendal Green was a woollen dyed with blue woad and yellow from the *genista tinctoria*. At Armboth, near Keswick, may be seen the "Webstone" by the side of which these goods were traded when no market could be held at Keswick because of plague. Half a mile out from Penrith, on the left of the road to Eamont Bridge, stands the "Plague Stone," containing a hollow in which the exchange money used to be disinfected in these plague times. The inroad of machinery upon the simpler modes of manufacturing woollen cloth was what chiefly led to the downfall of the Statesmen. Few members of his class exist. Probably there are not now six Statesmen at Grasmere.

Houses with hardly an exception sheltered them-

selves under the sides of hills beside streams (" becks ") or natural wells. In the northern parts of Lakeland the lowest classes had at one time lived in clay daubies, thatched huts of mud which could be constructed by a man and his neighbours in a single day. In Westmorland, such folk had dwelt in houses roughly constructed of unhewn and unmortared stone and covered in with irregular slates. But nearly all these sheds, by Wordsworth's time, had given place to dwellings more respectable and substantial. For these and larger buildings the roof-trees and the doors and window-frames were of oak, as were all the fastenings. At Armboth may be seen an old farmhouse door made of double oak planks bound together by 631 wooden pegs. It has been remarked that a dozen doors could now be constructed in the time that was needed by the old carpenters to fashion these pegs. Houses of an average size consisted of the dwelling-room, the dairy, and the parlour. The dwelling-room was a kitchen-hall for all and sundry. In the centre of this room stood an oak table of such size that it had to be constructed after its materials had been passed inside the door. Master and family and guests and servants all congregated round this table for meals. The plates were of maple-wood. Any liquors were served in miniature barrels, of which one stave stood higher than the others for a handle. The fire of peat or wood was kept ever going on a raised stone hearth built on to an inner wall of the house. The chimney, as large at the top as modern chimneys are at the bottom, came straight down as a widening vent until it entered the living-room in the form of a low canopy. Before this hearth there would be found a

few three-legged stools, and an upright staff fixed into a supporting log. The rushlights were attachable to this staff, at variable heights, by holes in its side. On either side of the hearth were fixed high-backed oaken forms on which most of the inhabitants would sit at night with caps on their heads to protect them from the steaming smuts that trickled down the chimney. Under one of these benches, doors enclosed family knitting and such things. Under the other fixed form there would lie as much "elding" as would suffice for the twenty-four hours. "Elding" was old peat or old wood. These great chimneys were of course used for drying bacon and other larger masses of flesh. Clarke tells us that he has seen six or seven carcases of sheep hanging within a single chimney. The better-class houses had a passage—the "hallan" —leading from the front door (which was a little sunk from the courtyard) to the back door opening on the stables and byres. Part of the framework of the doorway was the "threshwood," a solid balk of timber raised from the rest of the floor about five inches. To this inconvenient beam household piety ascribed many powers for good or evil. In Wordsworth's time, when more convenient houses were springing up, many of the Dalesmen could not enter them without instinctively lifting a foot to pass over the imaginary obstacle dear to superstition. Good houses of the old sort possessed a "down house" opening from the valley side of the mid passage. This "down house" was a tall roofed kind of barn in which such things as churning and brewing went on. Entering from the other side of the mid passage, and proceeding through the kitchen-hall, one came to the "Bower,"

which was the sleeping-room of the master and his wife. Above the kitchen was the loft in which the other members of the family and the servants reposed, the sexes being sundered by a slight wooden partition six or seven feet high. This loft was not ceiled; it was open to a roof often so carelessly put together that the occupants, waking of a winter's morning, might find themselves under coverlets of snow, or else soused in rain. Westmorlanders deny that their county is a damp one, for the descending showers soon disappear into the ground; but they admit that it is wet. In 1852, when the year's mean rainfall of England was thirty inches, that of Scawfell Pike was eighty-one; Sty Head, one hundred and twenty-four; Seathwaite, one hundred and fifty-six. Taking a period of ten years, we find the average rainfall of Seathwaite to be over one hundred and twenty-six inches; while for the rest of England it is computed as twenty-nine inches. Yet Windermere's sunshine record is usually next to that of Bournemouth, according to observations recorded for many years by the late Mr. James M. J. B. Baddeley.

It will have been gathered that men and women contented themselves with homespun duffel woollen for their principal garments. Black and white fleeces were mixed in the spinning to save the expense of dyeing. The men's coats and waistcoats were ornamented with brass buttons, where means permitted. Domestic servants received shifts, coats, gowns, and aprons as part of their wages. The money part would be (about 1770) £5 a year for a man, £2 10s. for a woman. Knee-breeches were the custom for centuries. They were buttoned tight above the

haunches, of course without any addition of braces. Holiday breeches were sometimes made of buckskin, but whether of buckskin or not, they were garnished at the knee with a knot of ribbon and a few bright buttons. Stockings were blue or grey. Clogs were the ordinary wear for all male creatures. Even the master-farmers kept their silver-buckled shoes for what we call state occasions. Masters and servants alike clattered about on every cobbled market-place in clogs—the warmest and driest footgear for folk who have much tramping through marshes and becks and cattle yards. Even to church the world went in clogs. To prevent the back of the wooden shoes from barking the shins of the wearers, and alike for economy of the woollen foot-gear, the stocking heels were reinforced with melted pitch and ashes of turf. To this day the labourers and school children use clogs. The women, over linsey-woolsey petticoats, wore long-tailed "bed gowns," and usually the "bed gown" was protected in front by a blue apron. The clogs of the women were more pointed than those of the men, and were also distinguished by having brass instead of iron clasps. The women's bonnets projected nearly a foot beyond the face of the wearer to fend off sun and rain alike. They took the form of a coal-scuttle, and were made of pasteboard covered with linen or black silk.

By the fireside, aided by one or two faint rushlights, the women formed parties of gossip for knitting and spinning. This was called "gaán a-sittin." The spinning was hardly ever performed by day, since there was an idea that the wool gave itself up to handling more generously when the

flocks were at rest. [See Wordsworth's *Song of the Spinning Wheel.*]

The people of the dale farms consumed quantities of fresh animal food during the autumn. The beasts had such poor feeding in the winter that by spring time they were not worth killing. During the summer half of the year, salmon and salt beef and salt mutton formed the chief solid foods, and as a result ague was common. When tea and coffee came in, about Wordsworth's time, they helped to banish the ague, which, however, was mainly dispelled by modern variety of foods and by improved sanitation. Almost the only bread of the old-fashioned Dalesfolk was "Haver-bread"—a thin form of oat-cake—and nourishing "Poddish" was made of the same meal boiled instead of baked. Cumberland could supply itself with oats, but Westmorland imported oats from that sister county and from Lancaster, York, and Durham. Home-brewed ale was the regular drink at breakfast and all other meals. Milk, butter, and cheese were of course furnished to every table from the farm.

The roads of the country were miserable. Indeed, what we should call a road was unknown; and wheeled carriages were unknown up to the time of Wordsworth's youth. There were only pack-horse tracks. A writer in 1875 mentions "an old man now living in Grasmere" whose grandmother could remember new church bells being brought to Grasmere on sledges by the old road over the top of White Moss—then the main road between Ambleside and Grasmere. All the lead covering the present roof of Windermere's old parish church was brought

CHURCH OF BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE IN 1806

(From an old print)

from Whitehaven by pack-horses. Travellers had only a choice between going on foot and going on horseback. The wife often rode "pillion" to market behind her husband. On a page of her Journal we find Dorothy Wordsworth thus riding "pillion" towards Penrith behind Mary Hutchinson. Sometimes a straw pad was all the saddle, and just as often a dried turf was shaped to perform the same office for the day. Strange to say, the opening of turnpike roads, between 1750 and 1760, had much to do with the downfall of Westmorland's local industries. It may be worth mentioning here that post-chaises were introduced in 1754; carriers' waggons in 1757; and the first stage-coach in 1762—a conveyance drawn by six horses and known as "The Flying Machine." The application of blasting processes to the land had not come into vogue, so it was hard and rough and hummocky. In 1843 (in spite of great improvements forced on the Statesmen by Agricultural Societies) returns showed that the average value of land per statute acre was in Westmorland nine shillings; Cumberland ten shillings and twopence; average of England, eighteen shillings and tenpence. It might take three persons and three horses to work one plough. A man drove the horses, one yoked before another. Next came a woman or a boy to keep the plough-beam down. A third helper had the hardest work of all in guiding the plough with a crook; and the furrows were sometimes left still so uneven that a fourth labourer had to follow with spade work. The ploughs were simple. It was quite common that a tree might be growing in the morning and be cut down and hewn into a plough

and perform a good day's work before dark. Agriculture was rude. "When a field was broken up out of grass, it was sown with black oats: all the manure of the estate was bestowed upon it for a crop of barley the next year; and the owner laid it down again in the third year with a second crop of oats, without the addition of grass seeds: so that the future produce of herbage was committed to nature and to accident." Earlier than the Reformation, fruit trees had taken a place in the gardens, but most of our pot herbs were unknown in the eighteenth century. The winter fattening of cattle was poorly carried out. Sheep, in the "off season," were fed on ivy and holly. Hogs were killed between Christmas and Candlemas. Salmon cost only twopence a pound, and the smaller river fish were contemned. The potato was brought into the district about 1700, but gained favour only slowly. The great peat mosses, a source of fuel, were soft to the depth of six feet with remains of oak, fir, and birch—many sodden logs still discoverable in this mass, with axe-strokes near the roots; long after the Conquest these districts had been described with terms of woodsmanship and hunting like Chase, Parks, Mastage, Pannage, Vert, Venison, Greenhue, Regarders, Foresters, Verderers. Brandy was curiously cheap about 1770—eight shillings a gallon.

Marbles of a dusky green, veined with white, were hewn occasionally from the hills near Ambleside and Knipe Scar. Copper, lead, and other minerals were abundant, but the quality has never adequately repaid the working. Slate quarries like those of Langdale maintained generations of villagers. Charcoal-burners

were numerous, and rested at night in woodland wigwams that compared unfavourably with those of North American Indians. Bands of potters (gipsies) roamed the land.

Of the recreations of the Dalesfolk perhaps wrestling came first. It is to be remarked that among the foremost wrestlers of the best period were some of the clergy: G. Wilkinson of Arlecdon, O. Littleton of Buttermere, and A. Brown of Egremont; this last famous over all the north for prowess and as inventor of the "chip" known as buttocking. The average height among the best wrestlers was about five feet eleven inches. The type was just "good Dalesman": broad shoulders, deep chest, stooping walk (due to the hills and heavy boots and clogs), aquiline noses, grey-blue eyes, fair hair: Vikings. These wrestlings, at Melmerby "rounds" on old Midsummer Day, or, say, at Langwathby on New Year's Day, were long-established though mitigated copies of the Viking contests. Thus Grettir Saga sets them forth:—

"Thord rushed at Grettir, but he stood still without flinching. Grettir then stretched his hand to the back of Thord, and got hold of his breeches, lifted him off his feet, over his head, and threw him down behind him, so that Thord's shoulders came down with a heavy thud. Then they said that the two brothers should attack him at the same time, and they did so; there was a hard tussle, and each had the better by turns, although Grettir always had one of them under him. They fell by turns on their knees, or dragged each other along; they grasped each other so tightly that they were all blue and bloody. All thought this the greatest fun, and when they stopped, thanked them for the wrestling, and it was the opinion of all who were present that the two brothers were not stronger than Grettir, though each of them had the strength of two strong men."

In 1785 (surely William Wordsworth went to see

it!) there was a prolonged wrestling contest on the ice of Windermere at the Ferry. The competitors fought it out in clogs, with a Kendal band of music to cheer them.

Next among the recreations come the dancing parties. On Christmas Eve, according to ancient custom, a fiddler went round to each house in a valley, wishing the dwellers therein "good-night," and at each visit he played a traditional tune still to be heard in these districts, though Sir Walter Scott deplores it as lost. It was the tune of *St. Dunstan's Hunt's Up.* Sometimes the fiddler was accompanied by singers. The usual thrift was thrown to the winds at Christmas. As they do in Norway, our Dalesmen made up long-lasting house parties, at which every possible cake and pie would be produced, accompanied by perennial ale posset. Those who liked the sops of the posset dipped for them with their spoons in a great bowl. This bowl was furnished with three or four long tubes through which those guests sucked who wished their liquor without sops—and without measure. The posset cup occupied a place of distinction in every home. Children at Muncaster, on the eve of the New Year, went from house to house with ditties, and craved "the bounty they were wont to have in old King Edward's days." The donation expected was a pie or twopence at each house.

The children had a game of their own—"Scotch and English," reminiscent of many a bloody foray. Boys divided themselves into two companies, each under a captain. Coats were doffed and piled beside a boundary stone. After skirmishing, the southron party would make a dash of invasion, exclaiming,

"Here's a leap into thy land, dry-bellied Scot!" If they could capture one of the enemy, he was set atop of the clothes, and could be rescued only by one of his own side swiftly snatching him without being touched. The long game went on till one or other party ignominiously covered the coats. Rushbearing, still encouraged at Grasmere and Ambleside and Warcop, was an ancient fashion of sending the children through the streets carrying to church a thanksgiving of flowers and rushes to strew on the floor of the pews [see *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, 32].

Cock-fighting was dear to young and old. At most of the Grammar Schools, including that of Hawkshead, the head masters and their boys enjoyed this sport in company on Shrove Tuesday. The prospectus for Penrith Races ended, "A Main, as usual!" At Troutbeck, near Windermere, Josiah Brown of Orrest Head, about a century ago, matched his bull to fight another man's bull—the defeated master to lose his animal. Josiah rode his bull all through the fight, and won.

Easter caused both men and women to take out for the first time from the oak chests the new clothes that were to last the ensuing year, and there was feasting only less lavish and prolonged than at Christmas. And again there was rustic rejoicing at the sheep-shearing or "clippings" in summer. Fox-hunting was common all over the Fells. A couple of hounds and a few terriers were kept in every dale; all human beings joining in the chase did so on foot. The sport was enforced; it was grim enmity, for the fox was a very real nuisance on the Fells. Langdale men have been known to trace a fox into a "borran"

at Stickle Tarn and watch it by relays of men for three weeks. In this case the Langdale fox proved cleverer than all the Langdale men. It escaped. The stone with which the earth had been stopped during the nights was one morning found to have been dislodged. Human Langdale accounted for this defeat by the surmise that "some Girsmer (Grasmere) chap mud ha' dun' it."

The Dalesman, for social reasons, regarded his two counties as broken up into numerous *Latings*. "To late" meant "To invite"; a Lating was a group of neighbours reasonably considered as within hail of each other. When any one died, two elder persons from each house in the Lating came to condole with the relatives; the younger friends arrived to "wake" the body. Mourners took away from the funeral, for consumption in their homes, little memorial loaves ("arval-bread"). Many houses had a corpse door, only used for a funeral, and thereafter walled up again, to keep the spirit out—a reminiscence of Viking feeling. When a birth occurred, all the married women of the Lating assembled in the birth-house and feasted at their own cost. At a "Bidden Wedding" the Lating turned out *en masse*, most of the folk on horseback. As soon as the service in church was over, the younger horsemen galloped a race to the bride's door for a ribbon. Football, wrestling, tossing the caber, and later, singing and cards, made up the entertainment, while bridegroom and bride sat for hours in state to receive presents of money or utensils, for the housekeeping in the new home.

At the Reformation the English people became possessed of the idea that a real man should be up-

sides with the clergy in Latin and Greek. Thus we advanced to the influence of Grammar Schools, an influence powerful even in Westmorland's lonely vales. Many of the young Dalesmen, educated at schools like those of Hawkshead, Kendal, or Appleby, went out into the bigger world for the ministry. Ordinary yeomen were found, able to read the New Testament in Greek. Grammar School masters would not teach writing, which was commonly left to itinerant scriveners. The women, being regarded as cooks and bakers, were given hardly any schooling, could not do the simplest sum of arithmetic, and were seldom smart with the pen.

If a Westmorland man ask for help towards a job, to the natural question, "What can you do?" the answer may be, "Everything." "Everything?" "Yes, I am a labourer." This will cause the questioner to watch Westmorland labourers, and the result will be surprise at the multiplicity of things the average Dalesman can do, and the range of rural knowledge with which even an illiterate mind may be stocked. But as some readers will expect mention here of "Wonderful Walker," we may take Walker as a typical encyclopædist of the northern valleys. Wordsworth's notes to the Duddon Sonnets copiously refer with honour to this worthy.

The Reverend Robert Walker was born in Seathwaite, son of a small Statesman—the youngest of twelve children, and so weakly that his father had to educate him at home until he reached the age of seventeen. He was then sent to school at Gosforth for about three years. Thereafter he became minister and schoolmaster of Buttermere, relying largely for

his sustenance on "Whittlegate," which was the customary right of the schoolmaster to be entertained in turn at the board of each farmer in the valley. Hardly any board was furnished with more than two or three knives, so the schoolmaster went abroad with his whittle (victual-knife) dangling from his neck. Walker wrote his own sermons and did duty twice every Sunday. During the week he rose every day between three and four. Besides the schoolmastering, he ploughed, planted, shepherded on the Fells, clipped or salved, mowed in haytime with scythe, in harvest time with sickle, all for hire. He was noted for hard work and long work. In the winter evenings he spun and fashioned his own clothes, knitted or mended his own stockings, and fashioned his own boots from leather of his own tanning. When he found leisure for a walk he usually arrived home with stores of wool gathered from trees and hedges. He doctored his parish and lawyered it, drawing up all wills, conveyances, and other covenants; he balanced accounts, and often accompanied farmers to market as general adviser. From Buttermere Walker was transferred to Torver, with Priest's Orders, and soon after this he married a Buttermere servant who brought him a fortune of forty pounds. He next settled at Seathwaite, where he acted as clergyman and as all manner of things and persons for sixty-seven years, on a clerical endowment of £5 per annum. There he taught school in the church, using the Communion table for the writing lessons, and spinning as he taught. He was learned in fossils and astronomy, collected butterflies, and studied with scientific curiosity the properties of the atmosphere. "Every Sunday

were served, upon the long table at which he has been described sitting with a child upon his knee, messes of broth, for the refreshment of those of his congregation who came from a distance, and usually took their seats as part of his own household. It seems scarcely possible that this custom could have commenced before the augmentation of his cure; and what would to many have been a high price of self-denial, was paid, by the pastor and his family, for this gratification."

Walker had the genius to be loved by generations of children. He had twelve children of his own, whom he settled in life. In the ninety-third year of his age, 1802, he died worth two thousand pounds. His gross income as clergyman had never exceeded £40. "He was yan o' the most strodner fowk as ivver lived —if he hedn't hed to scrat sea sair for a livin'. I' Wonderful Walker' time Seeathut parson gat varra lile money, an' hed to mak oot wi' a lock o' odds an' ends, sek as he could get hod on. Amang udder things, t' farmers all gev him a cleease o' oo, an' a sheet o' hay a piece a year. T' hay were to be as mich as he could carry fra' t' field in a blanket. An' aa've heeard t' aad standards o' Seeathut say that sometimes he packed t' blanket seea full that he couldn't trail it neaa way; an' he hed to take a lock on it oot afore he could manage to gan. . . . Bud what, he was a varra good giver, an' a varra good man, poor as he was." [Compare Wordsworth's Duddon Sonnet on *Seathwaite Chapel.*]

The two finest churches of Wordsworth's Lakeland proper were those of St. Kentigern's, Crosthwaite, and St. Martin's, Windermere—this latter, a building

the interior walls of which still bear scores of decorative texts selected by some Protestant vicar about the time of the Reformation.

Most of the churches or chapels were extremely small—that of Buttermere was only seventeen feet long. The incumbents of these churches generally worked in the fields during the week. Many kept school, during certain hours of each day, in the chancel. In Bishop Nicolson's eighteenth-century *Visitation* we read many items such as this: "The Quire at Warwick, as in many other places, is shamefully abused by the children that are taught in it." Sometimes, after Sunday service—if the day were very wet—folk would stay in church for a smoke. The parish poor were often miserably herded. At Hayton in 1773 the poor were "let" to a contractor. In many parishes, as late as 1788, the churchwardens patrolled the village or town during service in search of church-shirkers. In 1794 the following customs or beliefs were noted down at Whitbeck in West Cumberland:—

"Newly married persons beg corn to sow their first crop with, and are called corn-laiters. People always keep wake with the dead. The labouring ox is said to kneel at twelve o'clock at night, preceding the day of the Nativity; the bees are heard to sing at the same hour. On the morn of Christmas Day all breakfast early on hack-pudding, a mess made of sheep's heart mixed with suet and sweet fruits. To whichever quarter a bull faces in lying on All Hallows' Eve, from thence the wind will blow the greater part of the winter."

Of the superstitions of the Dalesmen perhaps the most interesting was the belief in "Need-fire." "Need-fire" has frequently been used in Cumberland and Westmorland within our own time. The Danish

word for cattle is "nöd." The "Need-fire" was the "Neat-fire"—fire through which cattle and human beings were driven, really for disinfecting, superstitiously for riddance from malign spirits. It used to be an annual observance. All fires in a village would be extinguished, and a deputation patrolled the village to see that not a spark had been left on any hearth. New fire was then raised by the friction of two pieces of wood, and from the flames thus kindled a great accumulation of peat and dry wood was set alight, the object being to establish "plenty of reek." Through the reek the frightened and loudly remonstrant beasts were driven, one and all. This was the sovereign charm against cattle plague. An ailing wife would sometimes be passed through the reek after the cattle had had their turn. The magic fire was forwarded from farm to farm.

In Wordsworth's boyhood, customs and beliefs relating to Wise Men and Witches, Beltain Fires, Fairies, Dobbies (Brownies), Holy Wells, and Lucks had not wholly disappeared. Bits of the rowan tree were considered effective against the bewitching of churns. This tree, which is the common mountain ash, was planted near stiles for protection to travellers in the darkness. Holed stones are still found hanging in stables, or built into the stable doors, to keep away the witches whose inquisitive fingers, inserted through the holes, could be snipped off with handy scissors. A disappointed lover was freed from the sorcery supposed to have crossed his amours if he were thoroughly rubbed over with pease-straw by persons of the opposite sex. People were sometimes conscious of possessing the evil eye and were actually so

obliging as to warn strangers about their power. A certain Penrith man, if he met a milkmaid trudging through a field, was known to bid her "cover her milk," and he would add, "I cannot help it." A few people still believe that the moon is capable or incapable of containing water according to the obliquity of its crescent. "I think it's drawing to rain, Robert." "Nay, net it—it'll nin rain—t' moon can hod nea watter." Fortune-telling still thrives, whether by cutting cards, reading the hands, or tossing cups.

In the Note to this chapter are indicated the sources from which an endeavour has been made to furnish a picture of the men and women, with their manners and customs and beliefs and traditions, in or before Wordsworth's time. Those who care to see such material made into local poetry should turn to Sidney Gilpin's *Songs and Ballads of Cumberland.* Westmorland produced scarcely any songs or ballads of modern repute. The Elizabethan of Burneside, Richard Braithwaite, remains her one poet of something like genius. Why was the faculty of song present in Cumberland and almost entirely absent in Westmorland? The answer seems to lie chiefly in this consideration—most of the minor poets sang by the banks of one peaceful river, the Caldew, but not near its source in Lakeland; they were dwellers in the plain of Inglewood Forest. Mixture of blood and contact with the Border, which had its own Memnon-notes at every sunrise, gave them song-utterance that had never belonged to the Norwegian settlers beside the torrents of the shy mountains. As for the Cumbrians, Josiah Relph of Sebergham (1712-43) wrote agreeable pastorals; Ewan Clark of Wigton

(1734-1811) did the like; John Stagg of Burgh-by-Sands (1770-1823) is Cumberland's portrait-painter in verse; Robert Anderson of Carlisle (1770-1833) was the ablest of these dialect poets, contemporary with Wordsworth. The works of such writers, so far as they dealt in sentiment, pleasantly ring the changes on the commonplaces (always touching enough) of the heart, with scarce one communication to the world of a new moving thought. So far as they are descriptive, they are of value as showing us the rural life of Cumberland, the Fairs, the Bride-wains, Upshots, Merry Nights, and other junketings. To turn from a mass of verse like this to Wordsworth's writings teaches how that poet had both the genius to divine a people and the genius to envelop them. To the educated world, Westmorland and Cumberland people are not the Dalesfolk of Anderson and Stagg, but Wordsworth's Folk.

Space forbids that we should enlarge on the old Border ballads that have more or less to do with the borders of Lakeland: for instance, not only *William of Cloudeslie* but *Johnnie Armstrong's Good-night*, *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, the fragments of *Child Rowland* and *Burd Ellen*, *The Lady of Bar-moor*, *Lady Jean*, *The Bridal of Netherby*, *Armstrong and Musgrave*, and *The Rising in the North*—utilised, this last, in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. It would require another volume, rather than a page or two, to summarise the lore of Egremont and Millom and Broughton Tower and Peele Castle, Furness Abbey, Calder Abbey, of the Runic remains at Beckermont and Gosforth, of fifty other centres of romance on the outer circle of Lakeland, as well as of the manors

within that circle which have tales to tell. Nor must anything be here attempted about Lakeland's Phantom Armies, vouched for by many witnesses as appearing repeatedly on Souter Fell.

In the last chapter, reference was made to Wordsworth's early-propounded theory that poetry should throw away verbiage and trust itself to expression through the language of common people. We had better remember, in interesting connection with this theory, what form of language the common people used in these Dales when they were talking to the poet and to Dorothy. It is probable that except where grammar-school education had led some Dalesman into the exercise of a learned profession, the vocabulary of the Dales in regular use would be considerably under one thousand words. We will give two specimens of Dale talk—not absolutely pure vernacular (for that would be intelligible only to a few), but the talk as it sounds to a fairly educated man from a neighbouring county.

Our first specimen is selected to convey to the reader some sense of the loneliness of an individual life in one of these valleys. This is the still virgin valley of Duddon—the very quintessence of all that is most purifying and exquisite in Lakeland's beauty—yet the valley of whose stream Wordsworth has declared that the whistling blast chants its birth, and desolation is its patron saint. Edwin Waugh, the Lancashire author, about the year 1859 was travelling up this valley and endeavoured to find Cockley Beck Farm. Casting his eyes round the sweet wilderness at even he discovered a clump of stunted trees in which he guessed that there might be a cottage. He

was right. He knocked at the cottage door, and the goodwife opened and said with a smile: "This is t' pleeàce. There's neea udder hoose i't daàl. Will ye cum in?" Presently the woman's husband, John Tyson, arrived from the Fells. "What," said he, "we're verra nee oot o' t' warld, ye see; for Cocklo' Beck's seb'm mile fra a mill, five mile fra a shop, an' aboon fower mile fra a church—an' hard roads tull it, as ye'll hev sin." Tyson's wife was led on to describe her spells of isolation, and the frights she got from the only tourists of these times.

"Sometimes thooar tramps ca's, i' threes an' fowers; an' sometimes mair nor that. Here was yan cam reight in bi hissel' yaa day, an' steeád upo' t' harstan, an' aa gev him tuppence; an' then he wad hev some bread an' cheese. Seeá, aa tell't him he mud gang to t' deár. An' seea, when he gat ootside, aa whipt deár tull, an' barred it. Bud, my word, hoo he dud cample! Aa rayley thought for a while he was like to brak in ageán. . . . Well, anudder time, here was six cam tegidder, when oor men was away amang t' fells, efter sheep. Aa gat a wap on 'em cummin' doon t' beck-side: sea aa fasten't t' hoose up, an' crape oot o' seet wi' t' childer. Bud, my word, didn't aa tremmle sair i' t' neuk; for they was a gey lang time afear they wad gang away; an' they tried to get in everywheers, but they couldn't manish. Aa was terrible fain when oor men gat heám that day. T' heál o' that lot was teán up, efter, at Ammleside, for summat or anudder. Girt dozzles o' bread an' cheese at hed bin gan tull 'em was fand sometimes hudden amang t' steáns bi t' road side."

Our other example of Dale talk shall be extracted from the same book—Waugh's *Rambles in the Lake Country*—with the purpose of mentioning in a cheerful association the gloomiest and, in many ways, the most impressive of the smaller lakes, Wastwater. The hero of this account is, of course, John Wilson, poet of *The Isle of Palms*, author also of *Noctes*

Ambrosianae, and one of the earliest of literary men to welcome the genius of Wordsworth. He died Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University. Ritson of Wastdale Inn is here the narrator:

"T' first time at Professor Wilson cam to Wastd'le Head, he hed a tent set up in a field, an' he gat it weel stock't wi' bread, an' beef, an' cheese, an' rum, an' ale, an' sic like. Then he gidder't up my granfadder, an' Thomas Tyson, an' Isaac Fletcher, an' Joseph Stable, an' aad Robert Grave, and some mair; an' there was gey deeds amang 'em. Then, nowt would sarra bud he would hev a boat, and they must all hev a sail. Well, when they gat into t' boat, he tell't 'em to be particklar careful, for he was liable to git giddy i' t' heàd; an' if yan ov his giddy fits sud chance to cum on he mud happen tummle into t' watter. Well, that pleased 'em all gaily weel, an' they said they'd tak varra girt care on him. Then he leaned back an' called oot that they must pull quicker. So they did; and what does Wilson do then but topples ower eb'm ov his back i' t' watter, with a splash. Then there was a girt cry—'Eh, Mr. Wilson's i' t' watter! Mr. Wilson's i' t' watter!' an yan click't, an annuder click't; but neàn o' them could get hod on him, and there was sek a scrowe as nivver. At last, yan o' them gat him round t' neck as he popped up at teàl o' t' boat; an' Wilson taad him to kep a good hod, for he mud happen slip him ageàn. But what, it was nowt but yan ov his bits o' pranks—he was snurkin' an' laughin' a' t' time. Wilson was a fine, gay, girt-hearted fellow, as strang as a lion, and as lish as a trout; an' he had sek antics as nivver man hed. Whativver ye sed tull him ye'd get your change for it gaily seán. . . . Aa remember there was a 'Merry Neet' at Wastd'le Head that varra time; an' Wilson an' t' aad parson was there amang t' rest. When they'd gotten a bit on, Wilson med a sang aboot t' parson. He med it reight off o' t' stick end. He began wi' t' parson first, then he gat to t' Pope, and then he turned it to the devil, an sic like, till he hed 'em fallin' off their cheers wi' fun. T' parson was quite astonished, an' rayder vext an' a', but at last he brust oot laughin' wi' t' rest."

This is the kind of speech that in the farthest corners of the Dales is still the medium of conversa-

tion. It was practically the only medium used by the folk among whom William and Dorothy Wordsworth passed a large portion of their lives. We know how successfully Coleridge has proved that more often than not Wordsworth in practice violated his own theory about the simplicities of poetic diction. Yet it must be put to the credit of Wordsworth that when he worked most intensely to convey to us the spirit and talk of these Dalesfolk, he achieved verisimilitude without once condescending to employ Dale dialect.

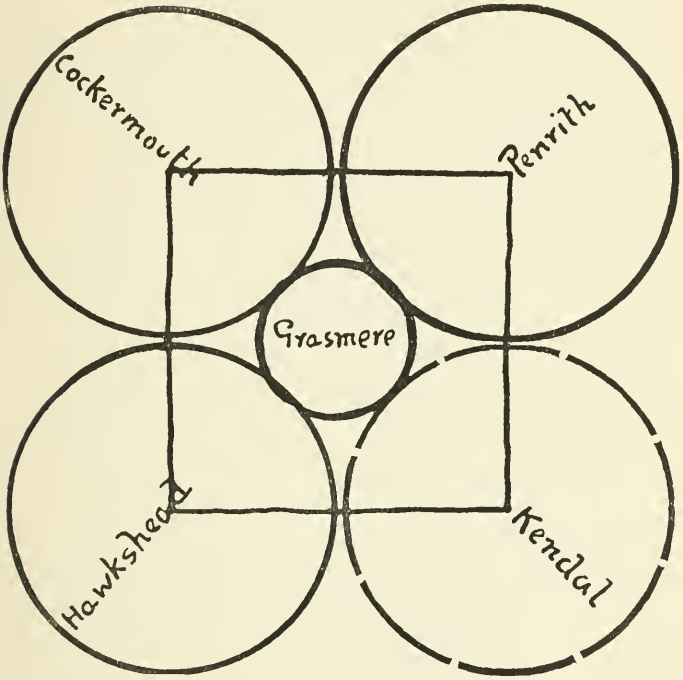
CHAPTER XVI

THE DALES

What are the boundaries of Wordsworthshire? It is hard to say. People come nigh to quarrelling when they attempt to define what is often called the Lake District. The first map in this chapter shows parts of Cumberland and Westmorland arranged in three circles, all with Grasmere as their centre. The outer circle has a radius of twenty-four miles, and touches important points like St. Bee's Head, Whitehaven, Workington, Appleby, Furness Abbey. The second circle, with a radius of eighteen miles, touches Penrith, Cartmel, Ulverston, Ravenglass, Beckermet, Cockermouth. The third circle, with a radius of fourteen miles, touches Skiddaw, Penruddock, Pooley Bridge on Ullswater, Bampton, Shap, Kendal, Newby Bridge on Windermere, Broughton-in-Furness, Ennerdale Fell, Lowes Water Fell, Bassenthwaite.

This inner circle we may take as the Heart of Wordsworthshire. The accompanying diagram reduces to symbols a working hypothesis as to the development of Wordsworth's powers. The square represents the Lake District, and more particularly represents Wordsworthshire, with Grasmere as its centre. At the four corners of the square stand Cockermouth, Penrith, Hawkshead, Kendal. Each of these places is the centre of a circle of in-

fluence, part of which falls within Wordsworthshire. The Cockermouth Circle typifies Pure Nature—the cradling and early fostering of Wordsworth in a quiet corner of the world where the winds of heaven and the mountain tops ennobled each other and begat these fair rivers with the Celtic names which passed



their murmurs into the boy's dreams. If one may use a rather poor word with a connotation that serves for the moment, this early period is "sensed" as that of a Danish Boy intoxicatingly surrounded by wild mountain beauty such as has been specially educative and dear to the Celtic race. The Penrith Circle shows Separation from Pure Nature—a comparatively

unhappy period. The *milieu* is mainly Anglo-Saxon —in Inglewood Forest. The Hawkshead Circle contains Return to Nature and beginnings of the Search for Natural Man, as distinguished from the Fighting Man and the Trading Man of Penrith's history. This circle shows a Danish Boy entered into a Celtic land appropriated by Scandinavians. The free feelings generated in the centre of this circle at Hawkshead are with Wordsworth later when he prepares to offer himself to the French as a leader for Revolution, still a little later when he sits amid the wreck of Revolution and gazes at the fallen Bastille, and still later again when he turns from the brawling world to seek a new balance of mind at Grasmere. The fourth circle has Kendal for its centre. A word of explanation about this circle will be given in our last chapter.

Looking at Grasmere in this diagram, or in the maps, we see going on one of the most interesting of spiritual processes that can be found in the history of great minds. In Eight-Pounds-a-Year Dove Cottage —living even more frugally than Spinoza or Kant— Wordsworth feels after a poetic synthesis of beauty in external Nature and beauty in Man's life. The surrounding mountains seem to extend to him a hospitality. But the people of the Dales do not understand our philosopher. The general world does not understand him. Down at this steaming but lovely centre of that cup of hills, the philosopher regains the perfect rest of consecration. He finds himself among Quietists—these Dalesfolk, Nature's Quakers. The Dalesmen form an antithesis to the hoarse crowds of the French Revolution. The dearest secret of humanity—the secret divined long

GRASMERE

ago at Cockermouth and Hawkshead—breathes itself forth once more amid these strong-hearted hills. The secret is man's power to endure. Hence Wordsworth's profound short poems about Michael, The Brothers, Resolution. This patience in humanity interests Wordsworth as faith interests the theologian. Wordsworth finds this quality—call it patience, faith, what you will—in external Nature also. So we are given *The Primrose of the Rock*, and poems akin.

> "The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
> Their fellowship renew;
> The stems are faithful to the root,
> That worketh out of view;
> And to the rock the root adheres
> In every fibre true.
>
> Close clings to earth the living rock,
> Though threatening still to fall;
> The earth is constant to her sphere;
> And God upholds them all."

It takes Wordsworth forty years to feel after and elucidate his philosophy of Being, his poetic ontology. The "still, sad music of humanity" and the winds on the mountain both give us the grandest cheer, when we have reached Wordsworth's central position.

> "Faith has her arch, her arch, when winds blow loud,
> *Into the consciousness of safety thrilled.*"
> —*The Everlasting Temple.*

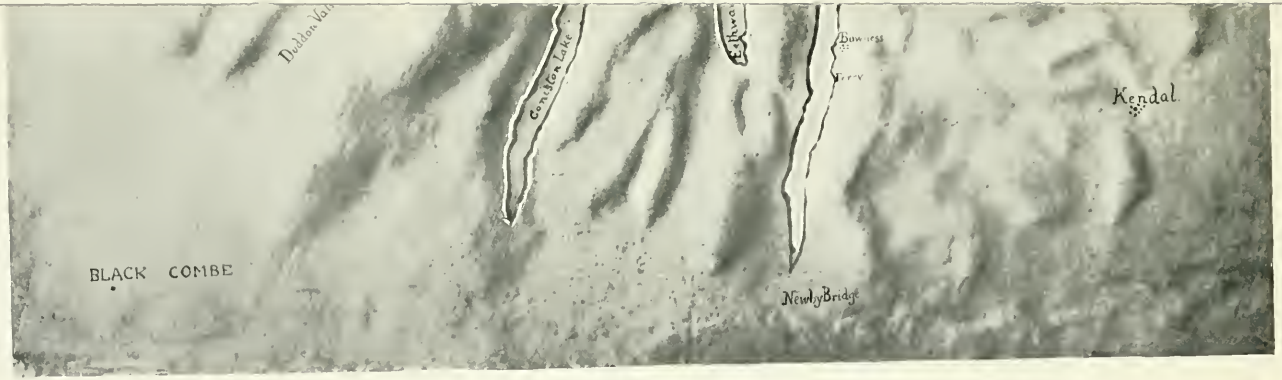
Forty years of brooding—and then our poet-philosopher gives us—*A Guide to the Lakes!* Anti-climax? Not at all. This "Guide" is a true book of philosophy. In its various editions the work goes through twenty-five years of further shaping before the author is satisfied with his philosophy. During most of the time he has been learning it from himself, and now he applies it to noble hills and to

peasants and yeomen among those hills whose heritage of independence was ancient when the Swiss Cantons fought out their liberty.

When his lesson is fully learnt, Wordsworth, at this last, most patient of poets (the withheld *Prelude* making subterranean music for his life, as the Hawkshead Beck was the unseen, familiar sweetener and explainer of that village), rises from lowly Grasmere and takes his position on the peak of Great Gable, or rather, aerially near it. Poised thus, Wordsworth looks down towards the world. The clouds that formerly made his canopy now part asunder below him, and he is willing to share with us his vision of earthly beauty. He bids us realise—

> "A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, *and in the mind of man:*
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."
>
> —*Tintern Abbey.*

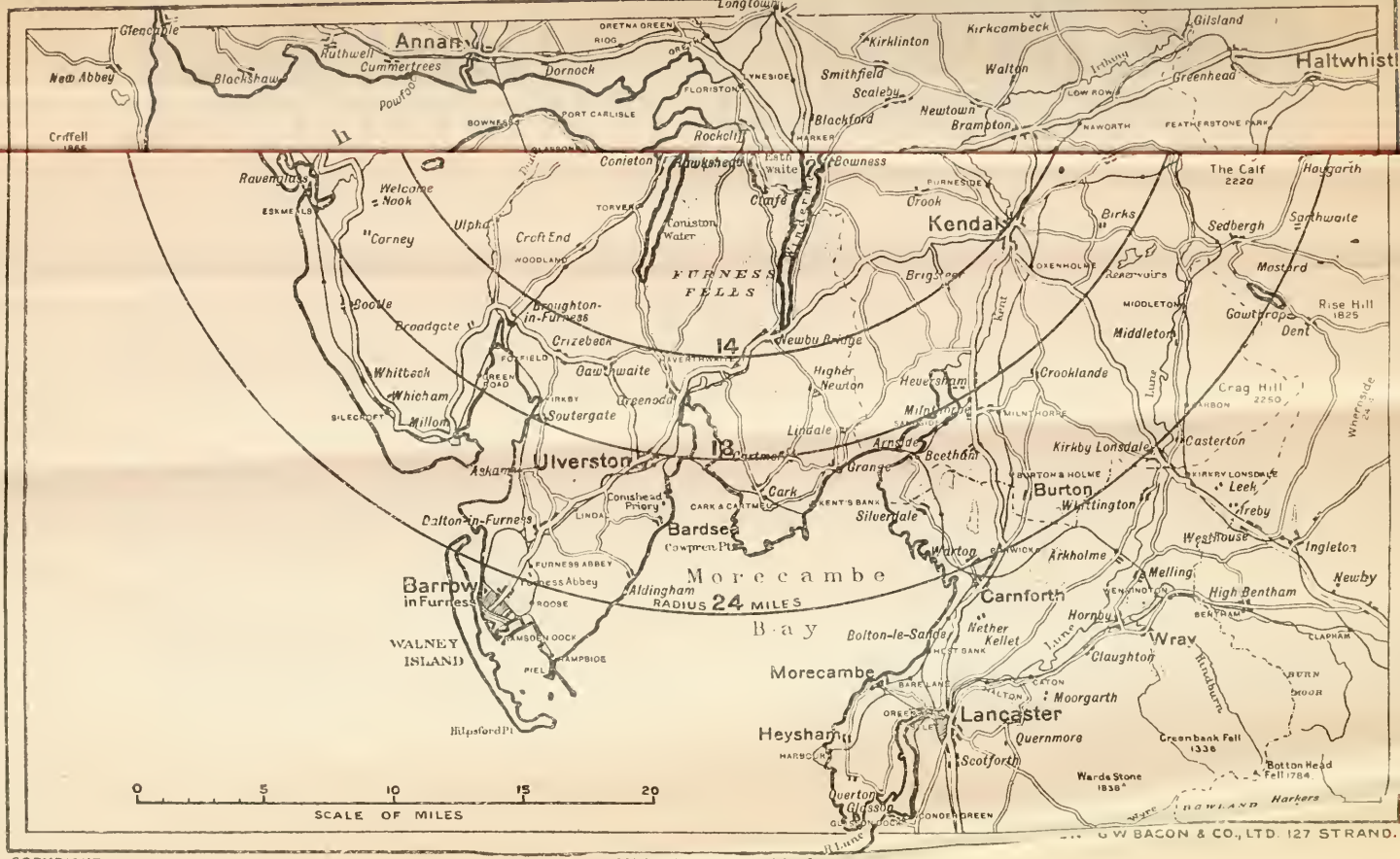
Being now come to the full of his human share in the loneliness of power (1810), Wordsworth writes this singular Guide Book *de haut en bas.* Even the most subtle of his passages, containing a rapture in their bosom, move cloud-like, slow and cold. Humanity in these valleys is analysed with steadiest pulse. This is a Mountain-Man, not a Hill-Man. He speaks almost like a Great Gable. Wordsworth is one of the high sort who love, not so much men as Man—not even children so much as the Heart of Childhood. Nowhere in the world are children more beautiful than the little ones as we meet them in these valleys


Doddon Val
Coniston Lake
Eethwa
Bowness
Kendal
BLACK COMBE
Newby Bridge

THE DALES

Cockermouth
SKIDDAW
BLENCATHARA
Penrith
Thirlfield
LATRIG
Keswick
Mullerdale
GREAT ROOD
Derwent Water
Ullswater
HINDSCARTH
HIGH STILE
HELVELLYN
PILLAR
RED PIKE
GREAT CARRIE
GLARAMARA
FAIRFIELD
RED SCREES
LANGDALE PIKES
SCAFFELL
BOW FELL
Langdale
Wastwater
WRYNOSE
WETHERLAM
OXEN FELL
Esadale
CONISTON OLD MAN
Windermere
Kendal
BLACK COMBE

THE DALES



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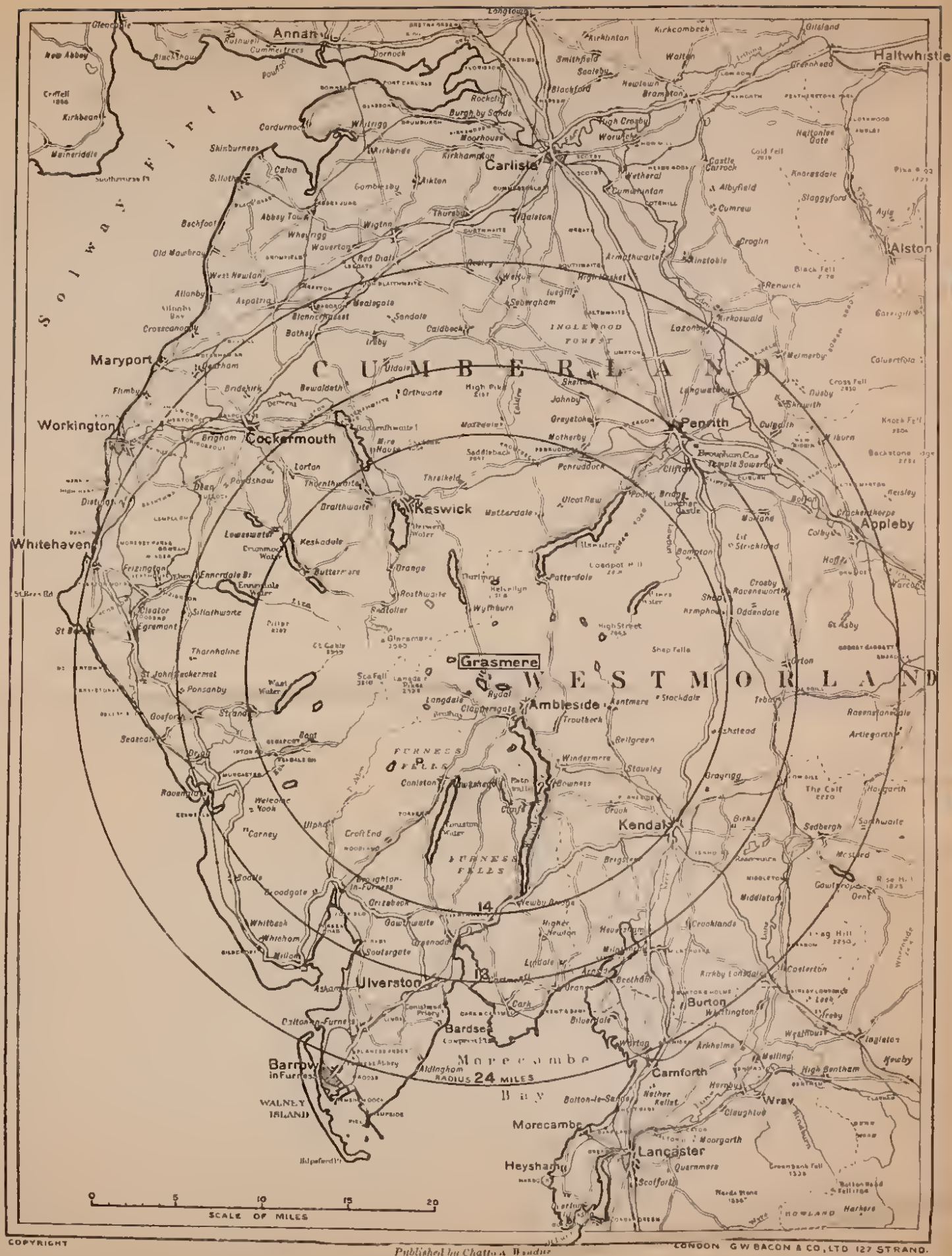

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happily homing their long way from some tiny communal school. The most ordinary saunterer cannot forget these fairest of things in all the fair wilderness. Wordsworth's "Guide" does not once refer to the delightful children of the Dales.

This book was composed, "to give a model of the manner in which topographical descriptions ought to be executed, in order to their being either useful or intelligible by evolving truly and distinctly one appearance from another." The general principles upon which the work was based were common to Wordsworth and Coleridge. In his *Essay on the Fine Arts*, Coleridge lays it down that the sense of beauty consists in intuition of the relation of parts each to each, and of all to the whole. "The operations of nature tend to the production of beauty by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole."

It is curious that neither Wordsworth nor any other writer has pointed out how the Lakes radiate from Grasmere like the spokes of a wheel (see map). However, the poet perceived the idea of a wheel and its spokes in another connection. John Briggs in his *Letters from the Lakes* (1825) hints that the idea belonged to the Dalesmen familiar with the Fells, and was expressed to him by a Little Langdale Statesman who had no knowledge of Wordsworth's "Guide." However this may be, Wordsworth takes us to a position midway between the peaks of Great Gable and Scawfell, and thence directs our attention to eight valleys diverging from a point under our feet, like the spokes issuing from the nave of a wheel. To the south-east we have the vale of Langdale, conducting the eye to the long lake of Windermere, which nearly

reaches the sea. (See our Map of the Dales.) Now, turning the gaze from south-east to south, we catch Coniston Vale running up from the sea towards the nave, but, unlike the other vales, stopping halfway, like a broken spike projecting inwards from the wheel's rim. Towards the west, we find the valley of Duddon provided with no lake. The fourth vale is like the last in general features; it is the dale of Esk, which meets the sea at Ravenglass.

Next, look down, almost due west, and you see deep Wastdale, with its chapel and few houses and patchwork walled fields, and desolate Wastwater beyond. Then, drawing the gaze still northward, we have Ennerdale, and the vale of Buttermere, and the vale of Crummock-water, and finally Borrowdale, of which Keswick Valley is a continuation. Thus, with eight neighbouring valleys of singular diversity, we have made out half of our wheel. It is necessary to transfer our hub now from the neighbourhood of Great Gable to the ridge of Helvellyn, five miles off, and then we shall see radiating from us the eastern spokes, St. John's Vale, Ullswater, Hawes-water, and the dales of Grasmere, Rydal, and Ambleside.

Having thus detailed the main valleys, our author shows us how these hills grow round Great Gable from every direction in an ascent of almost regular gradation. From this it follows that the several vales, through their varied position in relation to the sun, receive "every possible embellishment of beauty, dignity, and splendour, which light and shadow can bestow upon objects so diversified." Now, this is well worth noting, though it is perhaps a pity that the Statesmen and their estateless poet had not taken

Grasmere as the true geographical centre. However, Wordsworth demonstrates that, for example, in the valley of Windermere, the spectator will look to the south for gentle scenes, to the north for grand scenes. But in the valley of Keswick, which lies almost due north of this, the spectator will find the situation reversed. When the sun is setting in summer to the north-west, it is seen, by the spectator from the shores of Windermere, resting among the loftiest mountains, some of which will be half hidden by clouds, or by the blaze of light which that sun diffuses; and the surface of the lake will reflect before the eye correspondent colours through every variety of beauty. In the vale of Keswick, at the same period, the sun sets over the humbler regions of the landscape, and showers down upon them the radiance which at once veils and glorifies. Of course, there is as marked a difference between the noontide appearances of these two opposite vales. The haze that overspreads the south, and the shadows of the clouds in the north, at the same time of the day, are each seen in these several vales, with a contrast as striking.

The concentration of this valley-scheme is to be noted. From a point between Great Gable and Scawfell, a shepherd would not require more than an hour to descend into any one of eight of the principal vales by which he would be surrounded; and all the others lie (with the exception of Hawes-water) at but a small distance. Yet every valley has its distinct and separate character; in some instances, as if they had been formed in studied contrast to each other. Similarly, the hills all help each other. "In magni-

tude and grandeur they are individually inferior to the most celebrated of those in some other parts of this island; but, in the combinations which they make, towering above each other, or lifting themselves in ridges like the waves of a tumultuous sea, and in the beauty and variety of their surfaces and colours, they are surpassed by none."

Dwellers in the Lake District smile because, owing to the tyranny of the school holiday system in our country, the crowds of visitors come to Lakeland in August—precisely the worst time in the year. There is little of July or August in Wordsworth's poetry. "They who have studied the appearance of Nature feel that the superiority of mountainous over other countries is more strikingly displayed in winter than in summer. This is partly owing to the forms of the mountains, but also to the greater variety that exists in their winter than their summer colouring. The oak-coppices retain russet leaves; the birch stands conspicuous with its silver stem and puce-coloured twigs; the hollies, with green leaves and scarlet berries, have come forth to view from among the deciduous trees, whose summer foliage had concealed them: the ivy is now apparent upon the stems and boughs of the trees, and upon the steep rocks. In place of the deep summer-green of the herbage and fern, many rich colours play into each other over the surface of the mountains; turf, beds of withered fern, and grey rocks, being harmoniously blended together. The mosses and lichens are never so fresh and flourishing as in winter, if it be not a season of frost; and their minute beauties prodigally adorn the foreground. Add to this the hoar-frost and snow, with all the varieties they create."

As for lakes, the form of a lake is most perfect when, like Derwentwater, it least resembles that of a river. It is claimed as an advantage in this land of concentrated beauty that the largest of the lakes are comparatively small, and so the same dale generally furnishes a succession of lakes, instead of being filled with one. In these small lakes the effect of variety in their boundary line comes closely to the mind. "Sublimity is the result of Nature's first great dealings with the earth; but the tendency of her subsequent operations is towards beauty, by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole. This is exemplified along the margins of these lakes. Masses of rock, that have been precipitated into the waters, lie in some places like stranded ships, or have acquired the compact structures of jutting piers, or project in little peninsulas crested with wood. The smallest rivulet will be found to have been not useless in shaping a curve that would not otherwise have existed. But the more powerful brooks, encroaching upon the level of the lake, have in course of time given birth to ample promontories, of sweeping outline that contrasts boldly with the longitudinal base of the steeps on the opposite shore." Wordsworth declares Ullswater to be "on the whole, the happiest combination of beauty and grandeur which any of the lakes affords."

The islands dispersed among these lakes are neither so numerous nor so beautiful as might be expected; nor are they ornamented by the remains of castles or other places of defence, nor with the still more interesting ruins of religious edifices. Every one must regret that scarcely a vestige is left of the Oratory to the Virgin which stood upon

Chapel-Holm in Windermere, and that the Chauntry has disappeared from St. Herbert's Island, Derwentwater. There is a beautiful cluster of islands on Windermere; we have a pair pleasingly contrasted upon Rydal; nor must the solitary green island of Grasmere be forgotten. In the bosom of each of the lakes of Ennerdale and Devockwater is a single rock, which, owing to its neighbourhood to the sea, is "the haunt of cormorants and sea-mew's clang," a music well suited to the stern and wild character of the several scenes.

In the economy of Nature tarns are useful, as auxiliars to lakes; for if the whole quantity of water which falls upon the mountains in storm were poured direct upon the plains, the habitable grounds would be much more subject than they are to inundation. . . . . A tarn, in a vale, implies, for the most part, that the bed of the vale is not happily formed; that the water of the brooks can neither wholly escape nor diffuse itself over a large area. Accordingly, in such situations tarns are often surrounded by an unsightly tract of boggy ground; but this is not always the case, and when the shores of the tarn are determined, it differs only from the lake in being smaller. Of this class of miniature lakes, Loughrigg Tarn near Grasmere is the most beautiful example. It has a margin of green firm meadows, of rocks, and rocky woods, a few reeds here, a little company of water-lilies there, with beds of gravel or stone beyond; a tiny stream issuing neither briskly nor sluggishly out of it. Some few tarns have a varied outline, with bold heath-clad promontories; and as they mostly lie at the foot of a steep precipice, the water,

RED TARN, HELVELLYN

where the sun is not shining upon it, appears black and sullen; and, round the margin, huge stones and masses of rock are scattered.

The ocean lies near these valleys without intruding upon them. This country is bounded on the south and west by the sea, which combines beautifully, from many elevated points, with the inland scenery; and from the Bay of Morecambe the background of distant mountains is seen, composing pictures equally distinguished for amenity and for grandeur. There is no instance of the sea running far up among the mountains and mingling with the fresh-water lakes.

The woods consist chiefly of oak and birch (here and there, wych-elm) with underwood of hazel, thorn and hollies, alders and willows abounding in moist places, and yews among the rocks. The general sparseness of timber is deplored, but in the woods of Lowther is found "an almost matchless store of ancient trees, and the majesty and wildness of the native forest."

For the climate and its effects, it is admitted that rain comes down heartily, but it is frequently succeeded by clear, bright weather, when every brook is vocal, and every torrent sonorous. Days of unsettled weather, with partial showers, are frequent; but the showers, as they fly from hill to hill, are not less grateful to the eye than finely interwoven passages of gay and sad music are touching to the ear. Vapours exhaling from the lakes and meadows after sunrise in a hot season, or, in moist weather, brooding upon the heights or descending towards the valleys with inaudible motion, give a visionary character to everything around them; and are in themselves so

beautiful as to dispose us to enter into the feelings of those simple nations (such as the Laplanders of this day) by whom they are taken for guardian deities of the mountains—or to sympathise with others who have fancied these delicate apparitions to be the spirits of their departed ancestors. "Such clouds, cleaving to their stations, or lifting up suddenly their glittering heads from behind rocky barriers, or hurrying out of sight with speed of the sharpest edge, will often tempt an inhabitant to congratulate himself on belonging to a country of mists and clouds and storms, and make him think of the blank sky of Egypt and of the cerulean vacancy of Italy as an unanimated and even a sad spectacle."

It must be admitted that there are a few points in this "Guide" where Wordsworth, as Spiritual Proprietor, amuses us with his disparagements of other countries in comparison with his own domain.

The colour of autumn is to be noted: It is in autumn that the atmosphere seems refined, and the sky rendered more crystalline, as the vivifying heat of the year abates; the lights and shadows are more delicate; the colouring is richer and more finely harmonised; and, in this season of stillness, the ear being unoccupied, or only gently excited, the sense of vision becomes more susceptible of its appropriate enjoyments. The presence of a lake is indispensable to exhibit in perfection the beauty of one of these days. The reason of this is, that the heavens are not only brought down into the bosom of the earth, but the earth is mainly looked at, and thought of, through the medium of a purer element. The happiest time is when the equinoctial gales are de-

parted; but their fury may probably be called to mind by the sight of a few shattered boughs; or it may happen that the figure of one of the larger birds, a raven or a heron, is crossing silently among the reflected clouds, while the voice of the real bird, from the element aloft, gently awakens in the spectator the recollection of appetites and instincts, pursuits and occupations, that deform and agitate the world, yet have no power to prevent Nature from putting on an aspect capable of satisfying the most intense cravings for the tranquil, the lovely, and the perfect, to which man, the noblest of her creatures, is subject. [See Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal, quoted on page 255 of this book.]

Here are beautiful thoughts about the birds: "Their notes listened to by the side of broad still water, or heard in unison with the murmuring of mountain-brooks, have the compass of their power enlarged accordingly. There is also an imaginative influence in the voice of the cuckoo, when that voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley, very different from anything which can be excited by the same sound in a flat country."

We are now conducted through the times of the Celts, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans to the enfranchised shepherd or woodlander who, having chosen his place of residence, builds it of sods or of the mountain-stone, and with the permission of his lord encloses, like Robinson Crusoe, a small croft or two immediately at his door for such animals as he wishes to protect. Others are happy to imitate his example, and avail themselves of the same privileges; and thus a population, mainly of Danish or

Norse origin, as the dialect indicates, has crept on towards the more secluded parts of the valleys. Chapels, daughters of some distant mother-church, are erected in the more open vales, as those of Bowness and Grasmere, offsets of Kendal: which again, after a period, as the settled population increases, become mother-churches to smaller edifices, planted at length in almost every dale throughout the country. The arable and meadow land of the vales is possessed in common field; the several portions being marked out by stones, bushes, or trees. When first erected, stone fences must have little disfigured the face of the country, as part of the lines would everywhere be hidden by the quantity of native wood then remaining, and the lines would also be broken (as they still are) by the rocks which interrupt and vary their course.

Cottages are scattered over the valleys and under the hillsides and on the rocks; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings. The dwelling-houses, in many instances, are of the colour of the native rock; but frequently the dwelling or fire-house, as it is ordinarily called, has been distinguished from the barn or byre by rough-cast and whitewash. The singular beauty of the chimneys will not escape the eye of the attentive traveller. Sometimes a low chimney, almost upon a level with the roof, is overlaid with a slate supported upon four slender pillars, to prevent the wind from driving the smoke down the chimney. Others are of a quadrangular sort, rising one or two feet above the roof; which low square is often surmounted by a tall cylinder giving

to the cottage chimney the most beautiful shape in which it is ever seen. There is a pleasing harmony between a tall chimney of this circular form and the living column of smoke ascending from it through the still air.

The architecture of churches and chapels is of a style not less appropriate and admirable than that of the dwelling-houses and other structures. How sacred the spirit by which our forefathers were directed! The *religio loci* is nowhere violated by these unstinted yet unpretending works of human hands. They exhibit generally a well-proportioned oblong, with a suitable porch, in some instances a steeple tower, and in others nothing more than a small belfry in which one or two bells hang visibly. But these objects, though pleasing in their forms, must necessarily derive their chief interest from the sentiments of piety and reverence for the modest virtues and simple manners of humble life with which they may be contemplated. "A patriot, calling to mind the images of the stately fabrics of Canterbury, York, or Westminster, will find a heartfelt satisfaction in presence of this lowly pile [the chapel of Buttermere], as a monument of the wise institutions of our country, and as evidence of the all-pervading and paternal care of that venerable Establishment of which it is, perhaps, the humblest daughter. The edifice is scarcely larger than many of the single stones or fragments of rock which are scattered near it."

Excellent advice is given to those who come into this district with a desire to build houses therein. We all know how much Lakeland has suffered from the eagerness of town dwellers to take up their abode

amid its peace. The rich man from Yorkshire brings with him, as it were, a roof of red tiles which is like a shout. The man from London, after enduring the long unloveliness of streets, sets up in some secluded vale an isolated, high-shouldered white house that refuses to melt into the scene and irritates sober occupants of the country as if with the gibberings of a seaside Pierrot. Our poet says: "The principle that ought to determine the position, apparent size, and architecture of a house, viz. that it should be so constructed, and (if large) so much of it hidden, as to admit of its being gently incorporated into the scenery of Nature, should also determine its colour. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, 'If you would fix upon the best colour for your house, turn up a stone, or pluck up a handful of grass by the roots, and see what is the colour of the soil where the house is to stand, and let that be your choice.' The principle is, that the house must harmonise with the surrounding landscape: accordingly, in mountainous countries, with still more confidence may it be said, 'Look at the rocks and those parts of the mountains where the soil is visible, and they will furnish a safe direction.'"

Wordsworth's antipathy to white houses comes out in *Lines written with a Slate Pencil upon a Stone:*

> "If thou art one
> On fire with thy impatience to become
> An inmate of these mountains—if, disturbed
> By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
> Out of the quiet rock the elements
> Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
> In snow-white splendour—think again!"

The following passage may be quoted in regard to

the decay of Statesmen and the duty of those wealthy men who come into the district to take up the Statesman's lands: "These people participate in the general benefit which the island has derived from the increased value of the produce of land, brought about by the establishment of manufactories, and in the consequent quickening of agricultural industry. But this is far from making them amends; and now that home-manufactures are nearly done away, though the women and children might, at many seasons of the year, employ themselves with advantage in the fields beyond what they are accustomed to do, yet still all possible exertion in this way cannot be rationally expected from persons whose agricultural knowledge is so confined, and, above all, where there must necessarily be so small a capital. The consequence then is—that proprietors and farmers being no longer able to maintain themselves upon small farms, several are united in one, and the buildings go to decay or are destroyed; and that the lands of the Statesmen being mortgaged, and the owners constrained to part with them, they fall into the hands of wealthy purchasers, who in like manner unite and consolidate, and, if they wish to become residents, erect new mansions out of the ruins of the ancient cottages, whose little enclosures, with all the wild graces that grew out of them, disappear. The feudal tenure under which the estates are held has indeed done something towards checking this influx of new settlers; but so strong is the inclination, that these galling restraints are endured; and it is probable that in a few years the country on the margin of the Lakes will fall almost entirely into the possession of gentry, either strangers

or natives. It is then much to be wished that a better taste should prevail among these new proprietors, and, as they cannot be expected to leave things to themselves, that skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and beauty along which, without design and unconsciously, their humble predecessors have moved. In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste thoughout the whole island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the north of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy."

And now let us take leave of the "Guide" in quoting the following passage, which conveys to us a clear impression of the Poet's Land: "Towards the head of these Dales was found a perfect Republic of Shepherds and Agriculturists, among whom the plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or to the occasional accommodation of his neighbour. Two or three cows furnished each family with milk and cheese. The chapel was the only edifice that presided over these dwellings, the supreme head of this pure Commonwealth; the members of which existed in the midst of a powerful empire like an ideal society or an organised community, whose constitution had been imposed and regulated by the mountains which protected it. Neither high-born nobleman, knight, nor esquire was here; but many of these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land which they walked over and tilled had for more than five hundred years been possessed by men of their name and blood; and

venerable was the transition, when a curious traveller, descending from the heart of the mountains, had come to some ancient manorial residence in the more open parts of the Vales, which, through the rights attached to its proprietor, connected the almost visionary mountain republic he had been contemplating with the substantial frame of society as existing in the laws and constitution of a mighty empire."

There we perceive William and Dorothy Wordsworth entering into possession of "The Luck of Dove Cottage," which has been more potent for the empery of intellect than all the castled "Lucks" of Inglewood. The Luck of the Wordsworths was, to find a virgin population of a virgin region guarded by a massed battalion of hills breathing that peaceful charm which is engendered of strength mailed in beauty.

CHAPTER XVII

WORDSWORTH AS INTERPRETER

We have next to observe how, in the alchemics of poesy, this Lakeland with its inhabitants was made into or revealed as something rich and strange. Faithfully trying to summarise the literature descriptive of our two counties, as that literature described them about the period of Wordsworth's advent, we have in our fifteenth chapter displayed a set of people elemental, forceful with the largely animal force of primitives, good enough, certainly not too good, for human nature's daily food. Wordsworth, as we are to see from the many quotations now to follow, moved about in social worlds not realised, after he passed from Hawkshead and Cambridge. Even when the Bastille had fallen, he picked up one of its stones "in the guise of an enthusiast," yet in honest truth he looked for something that he could not find, "affecting more emotion" than he felt. He was "unprepared with needful knowledge," and so the Revolution found him indifferent, like one abruptly entering a theatre where the stage is busy with an action far advanced (*Prelude*, ix. 92). One clear thought indeed was ever with him, a principle seemingly inborn, or at any rate ingrained into the young poet's mind at Cockermouth Castle and on Penrith Beacon:

> "In the regal sceptre, and the pomp
> Of orders and degrees, I nothing found

Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,
That dazzled me, but rather what I mourned
And ill could brook, beholding that the best
Ruled not, and feeling that they ought to rule."

The poet had early breathed the atmosphere of a democracy so unartificial as to give ultimate balance to all his thinking:

"For, born in a poor district, and which yet
Retaineth more of ancient homeliness
Than any other nook of English ground,
It was my fortune scarcely to have seen,
Through the whole tenour of my school-day time,
The face of one who, whether boy or man,
Was vested with attention or respect
Through claims of wealth or blood; nor was it least
Of many benefits, in later years
Derived from academic institutes
And rules, that they held something up to view
Of a Republic, where all stood thus far
Upon equal ground; that we were brothers all
In honour, as in one community,
Scholars and gentlemen; where, furthermore,
Distinction open lay to all that came,
And wealth and titles were in less esteem
Than talents, worth, and prosperous industry.
Add unto this, subservience from the first
To presences of God's mysterious power
Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty,
And fellowship with venerable books,
To sanction the proud workings of the soul,
And mountain liberty."

In France, as in the North of England, Wordsworth's heart had certainly gone out trustfully to the peasants. It is not fair to criticise him as if he thought he had discovered in Westmorland and Cumberland a peculiar people. Had he lived in our age to read certain studies of Russian peasants, or Marguerite Audoux's intuitions of Normandy's farm

life as given in her *Marie Claire*, he would probably have been one of the first to delight in these tales about the bedrock of humanity revealed universally and best in the annals of the poor.

> "When we chanced
> One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
> Who crept along fitting her languid gait
> Unto a heifer's motion by a cord
> Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
> Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands
> Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
> Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
> In agitation said, 'Tis against *that*
> That we are fighting,' I with him believed
> That a benignant spirit was abroad
> Which might not be withstood."
>
> —*Prelude*, ix. 509.

The French girl with her heifer and Dorsetshire Margaret and the Cumberland leech-gatherer all move towards the great Judge under one sky. Let us not forget, however, that Wordsworth was right in claiming the background of a peculiar land for his own peasant neighbours, a land of unoppressed beauty which speaks to us through him with serene authority:

> "To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,
> Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
> I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
> Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
> Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
> That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
> Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
> Or Beauty Nature's daily face put on
> From transitory passion, unto this
> I was as sensitive as waters are
> To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
> Of passion; was obedient as a lute
> That waits upon the touches of the wind."
>
> —*Prelude*, iii. 127.

It has been said elsewhere that Wordsworth had the genius to envelop the Dalesfolk with the truest poetic atmosphere, but that he had also the genius to divine them as none of the local historians or singers had done. They were and are a mute people. They hide away their souls; even husband hides heart and soul from wife. Their reticence is not blankness of mind. Wordsworth divined and sometimes (largely through Dorothy) drew out what he divined:

"Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites;
From many other uncouth vagrants (passed
In fear) have walked with quicker step; but why
Take note of this? When I began to inquire,
To watch and question those I met, and speak
Without reserve to them, the lonely roads
Were open schools in which I daily read
With most delight the passions of mankind,
Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed;
There saw into the depth of human souls,
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes. And—now convinced at heart
How little those formalities to which
With overweening trust alone we give
The name of Education have to do
With real feeling and just sense; how vain
A correspondence with the talking world
Proves to the most; and called to make good search
If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
With toil, be therefore yoked with ignorance;
If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
And intellectual strength so rare a boon—
I prized such walks still more, for there I found
Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
And steadiness, and healing and repose
To every angry passion. There I heard,
From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
Replete with honour; sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair."

—*Prelude*, xiii. 157.

The poet—if we may recur to the Alfoxden symbols—becomes again more interested in the bread than in the brandy of life. At Alfoxden, in spite of visions of truest inspiration, he had often reached depths of moral despair. [To think that a William Godwin should have power to reduce a Wordsworth to such a pass!] And it was not flights with Coleridge into the supernaturals of fancy that restored to Wordsworth equable poise of soul; no, it was Dorothy who accomplished this, by wooing him back to Nature.

"Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not walk
With scoffers, seeking light and gay revenge
From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate down
In reconcilement with an utter waste
Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,
(Too well I loved, in that my spring of life,
Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward)
But turned to abstract science, and there sought
Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned
Where the disturbances of space and time—
Whether in matters various, properties
Inherent, or from human will and power
Derived—find no admission. Then it was—
Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!—
That the belovèd Sister in whose sight
Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
Of sudden admonition—like a brook
That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,
Companion never lost through many a league—
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
She whispered still that brightness would return;
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth."

—*Prelude*, xi. 321.

And so—

> ". . . Nature's self,
> By all varieties of human love
> Assisted, led me back through opening day
> To those sweet counsels between head and heart
> Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace."
>
> —*Prelude*, xi. 351.

Amid the lovelinesses that for most men of the artistic temperament simply fan the cheek and quit it like the breeze, Wordsworth exults to find his soul harmonised with the total sphere; nay, harmonised, in its subconscious heritage, with the Universal.

Here may be expressed a belief that howsoever—through Coleridge altogether or not; at any rate some will think it was mostly by the native construction of his own mind—howsoever Wordsworth attained his metaphysic, that metaphysic is likely to be more in accord with the philosophic thought of the uprising generation than it has been welcome to the speculations of the nineteenth century. Pure Hegelian Idealism equally with Materialism makes man a bubble on the stream. Either system submits man to necessity. It little signifies whether one system regards mind as a bubble of the spirit—a syllable in the language of "God"—or another system regards mind as a froth from matter. Philosophy seems now wholly teleological, and discerns a way and meaning and value for man's soul in the study of its highest manifestations, not its lowest. Professor Arthur Thomson, a representative of pure science, puts the matter thus:

> "When we consider any particular corner in the inanimate world, say the making of the Niagara Falls, or the making of

the frost flowers on the window, we do not require in our re-description more than mechanical formulæ; but when we consider Nature, not in isolated pieces but as a harmonious whole, the progressive order, the orderly progress, and the beauty of it all, when we go on to recognise that the earth has been the parent of its tenants, then we must read back into the world-egg with which we start a potentiality of giving rise to all that follows."

Such is Wordsworth's way of thinking. This poet —far, far, of course, from Materialism—has been accused of being simply a subjective Idealist. His teleology is firm, and his poetic philosophy, while it repudiates any mechanical theory of creation, equally repudiates idealistic Pantheism. The tenor of this chapter's quotations from poetry suffices to prove this. But a letter of Wordsworth's addressed to Mrs. Clarkson in 1814, and published in the *Athenæum* of February 27, 1904, will here interestingly illustrate the poet's middle-way between subjective Idealism and the mechanical theory of God that—though removed from Materialism—is not much more helpful than that mechanism of a no-God:

"Your friend condemns me for not distinguishing between Nature as the work of God and God Himself. But where does she find this doctrine inculcated? Whence does she gather that the author of the *Excursion* looks upon Nature and God as the same? He does not indeed consider the supreme Being as bearing the same relation to the universe as a watchmaker bears to a watch. In fact, there is nothing in the course of religious education adopted in this country, and in the use made by us of the Holy Scriptures, that appears to me so injurious as the perpetually talking about *making* by God. Oh! that your correspondent had heard a conversation which I had in bed with my sweet little boy, four and a half years old, upon this subject the other morning. 'How did God make us? Where is God? How does He speak? He never spoke to *me*.' I told him that God was a Spirit, that He was not like his

flesh which he could touch; but more like his thoughts in his mind which he could not touch. The wind was tossing the fir-trees, and the sky and light were dancing about in their dark branches, as seen through the window. Noting these fluctuations he exclaimed eagerly, 'There's a bit of Him, I see it there.' This is not meant entirely for father's prattle, but, for Heaven's sake, in your religious talk with children say as little as possible about *making*."

As we cannot use logic to prove to ourselves what lies in us of the greatest, so we need not expect "criticism" to reveal Wordsworth's gospel of natural sanity. He could not himself produce cold logic to prove its truth. We must be content to dwell in the region of intuitions which he has best explored, until by cumulative feeling we become convinced that we "are greater than we know," as Nature is. This cumulative impression—impossible indeed to achieve except by long loving of Nature's persistent harmonies and Life's faithful Highest "ere they seem worthy of our love"—is indicated in the introductory lines of the *Excursion*:

"On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessèd consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;

Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:—'fit audience let me find though few!'"

Let us try here the method of contrast. A sincere and honoured thinker of our age—perhaps the most mordant questioner we possess, is a poet as well as a lover of the poor of England, distinguished among great novelists. He puts before us these thoughts as floating through the mind of Deity:

"My labours—logicless—
You may explain; not I:
Sense-sealed I have wrought, without a guess
That I evolved a Consciousness
To ask for reasons why.

Strange that ephemeral creatures who
By my own ordering are,
Should see the shortness of my view,
Use ethic tests I never knew,
Or made provision for!"

—From *Time's Laughing-stock.*

These ideas are not a mere whimsical interlude of thought such as Browning conceivably might have tossed off for a dramatic purpose. They are an ironic but perfectly sincere expression of a man's relation to "God." It is good for us all to have such an expression to ponder, as a corrective to any optimism that fears deep introspection and deep reflection upon the mysteries seemingly outside of us. We may put between Mr. Thomas Hardy and Wordsworth, Tolstoy's reminiscence of the bear:

"I remember once, when a bear attacked me and pressed me down under him, driving the claws of his enormous paw into

my shoulder, I felt no pain. I lay under him and looked into his warm, large mouth, with its wet, white teeth. He breathed above me, and I saw how he turned his head to get into position to bite into both my temples at once; and in his hurry, or from excited appetite, he made a trial snap in the air just above my head, and again opened his mouth—that red, wet, hungry mouth, dripping with saliva. I felt I was about to die, and looked into the depths of that mouth, as one condemned to execution looks into the grave dug for him. I looked, and I remember that I felt no fear or dread. I saw with one eye, beyond the outline of that mouth, *a patch of blue sky* gleaming between purple clouds roughly piled on one another, and I thought how lovely it was up there!"

Thomas Hardy might question the significance of this incidental patch of blue sky and say that a Bear is the inevitable thing for every man. But some disciples of the other poet would reply, "Wordsworth, boy and man, was able to value that patch of blue without help from any bear—saw almost habitually in Nature and in the mind of Man good things that are squandered through the world of percipience with only too few percipients habituated from childhood to note them." Learn life from a chronicle, and you may come to think that history is a smothering lie agreed upon. Learn as Wordsworth learned by Derwent and on Skiddaw, and it is the constantly recurring "patch of blue" that carries the highest significance. We fully realise that the "patch of blue" is a film not even sky-deep in the immensities, yet it belongs to the suggestions of persistent beauty, as a fine thought of Plato's or Wordsworth's does.

"Above all
Were re-established now those watchful thoughts
Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
In what the Historian's pen so much delights
To blazon—power and energy detached

From moral purpose—early tutored me
To look with feelings of fraternal love
Upon the unassuming things that hold
A silent station in this beauteous world."

—*Prelude*, xiii. 39.

"Dreamer of dreams, your Wordsworth," says some reader, "he gives us a wistful hope instead of a faith. We are still at the beginning of things. All that the philosophers, all that the poets have given us as our inheritance is only a larger sheaf of straws." Not so. No one will claim that Wordsworth has pronounced the final word on any matter. But if we are still at the beginning of things, he has heartened us to carry on our beginnings. Nature, for his immediate predecessors, had little spiritual comfort, for it was little loved. Look still further back into the ballads, songs, and saws of the times Wordsworth distrusted, and see how they all express a *dread* of nature:

"Says Tweed to Till,
What gars ye rin sae still?
Says Till to Tweed,
Though ye rin wi' speed,
An' I rin slaw,
For ae man that ye droon,
I droon twa."

Wordsworth has changed all this, and that is indeed a helpful contribution to our beginnings:

"These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hushed; the roaring waters, and the still—
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know if I be silent, morn or even:

> For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
> Will find a vent; and thought is praise to him,
> Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
> From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!"
> —*Excursion*, ix. 743.

Wordsworth still can teach this thankfulness to any one who chooses to study thankfulness as some study the ways of greed. But Wordsworth can teach more than affectionate admiration of nature; he teaches us that, at our best, we may feel ourselves part and parcel of the best in the Universe, so far as it is revealed. Why must we be bidden to stare stupidly into the blanks of space alone, and not also into the starry depths of Man's undaunted and unexhausted mind? Bid fancy look down from Helvellyn upon the road, and there descry a black speck moving. It is Wordsworth. The tenth of that speck is a poet's head; a tenth of that tenth, his brain; the tenth of the tenth of the tenth of the speck, his imaginative faculty. This tenth of a tenth of a tenth of the black speck lifts us—a mind apparently was made to lift other minds—and teaches us to comprehend and trust the All. It covers or discovers these hills until they are almost forgotten as Westmorland, and draw reverent men and women from all parts of the earth to Wordsworthshire. This is a mighty poet's function. Once, at night, Wordsworth and two companions climbed a mountain in a fog (*Prelude*, xiv. 11) and suddenly all three strugglers found the mists lying white at their feet, stricken through with the moonlit serenity of clearest heavens:

> "There I beheld the emblem of a mind
> That feeds upon infinity, that broods

Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,
That mutual domination which she loves
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,
And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own.
This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe:
They from their native selves can send abroad
Kindred mutations; for themselves create
A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns
Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery,
Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.
Them the enduring and the transient both
Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
From least suggestions; ever on the watch,
Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
They need not extraordinary calls
To rouse them; in a world of life they live,
By sensible impressions not enthralled,
But by their quickening impulse made more prompt
To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
And with the generations of mankind
Spread over time, past, present, and to come,
Age after age, till Time shall be no more."

KIRKSTONE PASS

(Between Windermere and Ullswater)

CHAPTER XVIII

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH'S PROSE POEMS

Dorothy Wordsworth somehow, from among modern writing women, as Charles Lamb from among men, has crept closest to our country's heart. She is exquisite, in sensibility and in the faculty of wonder. Her very meekness furnishes her dignity, so that she has created a fresh standard of judgment about "quality" in a lady. Sister, slave, and chief human inspirer of one of the three supreme poets of her England—from infancy by Derwent to her rest by Rothay, she moved, unspoiled and all-unconscious, amid those Beatitudes which possibly stirred waiting mountain echoes ere ever they sank into the soul of humanity.

Some accuse Dorothy of having withdrawn her brother from creative design. We have to remember that both William and Dorothy were out-of-door observers and out-of-door thinkers. Perhaps it is a temptation of Nature itself to draw the mortal mind into the vague, although Walt Whitman declares that all the greatest poetry of the world has been created *au grand air*. No doubt Wordsworth had too many women about him, ready to humour him at any hour by taking up the pen in his service. His mind had ever been retentive for unwritten composition. *Tintern Abbey* was begun and completed in one day without notes, and the author's brain at

evening was able to discharge that work at a single birth, perfect. An ode is the outcome in song of a prolonged but single rapture, and a man fond of conceits might hold with some show of truth that *Tintern Abbey* is the only authenticated single rapture of this sort. In creating the *Prelude* and the *Excursion* Wordsworth indeed confined himself to the heroic monotony of blank verse, yet through these poems he poured his thoughts far too loosely: they are leisurely rhapsodies, long-drawn odes. We know that Dorothy had nothing to do with the planning of that triad of poems which Wordsworth set before himself as his "Cathedral." This was quite out of the range of her imagination. It was here that Wordsworth failed most conspicuously, for it was here he made his most deliberate bid against Milton's fame, and he found years wherein to be too deliberate. Hence a plan all-comprehensive, instead of strong by exclusion of the unessential. Wordsworth brought himself to believe that he could transmute anything into poetry; he mistakenly took all knowledge for his province. Given a sea whereon to voyage, Wordsworth could not steer a straight course. Given a quarry, he left it a quarry glorified. This diffuseness is to be laid, not to the charge of Dorothy, but to the charge of Wordsworth himself. The wind at Hawkshead was more his teacher than Virgil. At Cambridge, more Greek and less reading in Spanish and Italian would have been for his discipline. The sonnet—that unexpected austerity of form springing from exuberant Romance, demanding the care of a carver in ebony, onyx, or enamel, became to Wordsworth of the highest value for training in compression

of thought. Here, but especially in later and more joyous lyric forms—or rather lyric subjects, since form she left to her brother—Dorothy was admitted almost to equality of taste with the poet. In power to perceive germ poetry of the most natural lyric sort, Dorothy was scarcely less marvellous than her brother. Then this was odd in so self-contained a man, that although few preachers can utter a good sermon upon a prescribed text, and painters can seldom paint what others have discovered for them, Wordsworth was meekly glad to be led up to a subject—by Dorothy. In lyric work he never scorned a partnership—with Dorothy. Baking, cooking, washing, ironing, doing practically everything demanded at Dove Cottage by imperative economy—herself ever ready to fall back on the remembered cheer of a Windy Brow potato—Dorothy was a soft whirlwind of delicate cares round the riches of her brother's mind. For thrift, upsides in half of every day with Wonderful Walker, she was on a level with her wonderful William for the other half, as a lover of letters and as a lover of the book of Nature, nobly planned to warn, comfort, and even occasionally command a lyric poet.

A thoughtful boy may well be envied while, sprawled on a hearthrug, he reads by the firelight Lamb's *Essays* for the first time. More to be envied are the young or old persons who, with a knowledge of Lakeland and of William Wordsworth's best poetry about Lakeland, are ever stealing back to Dorothy Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal for fresh lessons on the art of noting. Dorothy would have shrunk from being called a writing woman. Hers was Cumberland shyness. Her immortal Journals—immortal, if

the spirit of daisies be immortal—were penned for William's help, and were copied by the gentle writer for her friend Mrs. Clarkson. Dorothy resisted all temptations towards publishing the Grasmere portion of these records. It seemed to her it would be a violation of self to yield thus. Nay, to ourselves the now-permitted reading of her holy mind—especially as it is expressed about her poet—conveys a certain sense of privilege invaded. Yet "Wordsworthshire" would be lorn without the Journal. Who wrote the noblest Guide to the Lakes—William or Dorothy? Let the reader study every page of the Journal and of the other work before attempting to decide—and then he will not decide. The two books are as complementary, and as little comparable, as Great Gable and Grasmere.

Dorothy never ran ahead or ran back. She did not torment herself, like William, towards deductions. She was glad for what she actually saw in the sun and the flickering shadows, and supremely exemplified what Elizabeth Barrett Browning called "Woman's sense of Now." Hence that "rest at the heart's core"—to quote in turn Christina Rossetti—that comes to us when we read Dorothy's thoughts by William's firelight.

It has already been remarked that the Wordsworths did their thinking out-of-doors. As an out-of-door observer, Dorothy strikes one as having little care for the beauty of houses and much care for colour in vegetation—with an especial welcome for yellow whenever she can detect its cheerful tints in a landscape not prodigal of open joy. Dorothy notes a decayed house in Borrowdale, with tall, silent rocks,

DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE

gaunt through the broken windows—but even this touch is really derived from William Wordsworth (page 49, Knight's edition of the *Journals*, vol. i.). At Rydal, one evening, while air and lake are still, Dorothy grows sad, and can hardly drag herself away, gazing at one cottage-light in the vale, with so much of the day left that the woods, trees, and houses can be distinguished, while two or three different kinds of birds sing at intervals on the opposite shore (34). Beasts are not often mentioned. Going through a field, Dorothy sits down for an hour, afraid to pass a cow. "The cow looked at me, and I looked at the cow, and whenever I stirred the cow gave over eating" (102). Upon the side of Loughrigg Dorothy's heart feels dissolved in the view, when she is—not startled, but called from her reverie by a noise as of a child paddling with shoes. She looks up and perceives a lamb. It approaches nearer and nearer, as if to examine the newcomer, and stands a long time. The newcomer does not move. At last the lamb runs past her and goes bleating along the pathway, seeming to be seeking its mother (36). For birds Dorothy has more attention than for beasts. The busy stone-chats curiously amuse her quiet eye. They are frequently to be seen in these pages. Their restless voices are sometimes as busy as their wings while they skim along the waters, following each other, their shadows under them, until they return to the stones on the shore, chirping with the same unwearied voice (32). We see the heron swimming with only its neck out of water, and beating and struggling long ere it wings its way out from its adventure (35). In Dove Cottage garden the blackbird sits quietly in

its nest, though rocked by the wind and beaten by the rain (32). One night, as brother and sister turn a corner near their little shelter, with the church and the whole vale before them, they feel that it is a blessed place. The birds are about them on all sides. Skobbies, robins, bullfinches and crows fly over their heads, as the loiterers are warned by the sound of the beating of the air above. They stay till the light of day is going, and the little birds have begun to settle their singing. But a thrush not far off seems to sing louder and clearer than the thrushes had sung when it was quite day (115). At another time William, lying still in the orchard, finds a little bird perched upon his leg—a young creature that has just left its nest, equally unacquainted with man and unaccustomed to struggle against the storms and winds. Presently it seems bemazed in the stiff boughs of the apple tree, with the wind blowing (131). For more than an hour Dorothy watches some swallows at their new-built nest—where they sit both mornings and evenings, but do not pass the nights. Every now and then there is a motion in their wings, a sort of tremulousness, and they sing a low song to one another. Ten days are employed in building this nest, and lo! it falls down. Next morning Dorothy goes out on purpose to see the swallows' faces (134). Again, when Dorothy is to start on a long journey, she bids farewell to her swallows. They had sung to her after she was in bed; they had seemed to be singing to one another just before they settled to rest for the night (137). Two ravens are observed flying high, high in the sky, the sun shining upon their bellies and their

wings, long after there is none of his light to be seen but a little patch on the top of Loughrigg Fell (116). Dorothy and William hear a strange sound in the Bainrigg's Wood, as they drift upon the lake; it seems in the wood, but it must have been above it, for presently a raven appears very high over them. It calls out and the dome of the sky seems to echo the sound. It calls again and again as it flies onwards, and the mountains give back the sound as if from their centre; a musical bell-like answering to the bird's hoarse voice. Both the call of the bird and the echo are audible after he can be seen no more (44—compare *Excursion*, iv. 1178).

Both William and Dorothy Wordsworth made it a practice to talk with wayfarers whom they met or overtook. One strongly suspects that William was impelled to this practice as much by literary curiosity as by brotherly warmth of feeling:

> "Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
> Whom I already loved; *not verily*
> *For their own sakes*, but for the hills and fields
> Where was their occupation and abode."—*Michael.*

But Dorothy was to such chance acquaintances like a touch of sunlight on the shoulder:

> "Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,
> Could they have known her, would have loved; methought
> Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
> That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,
> And everything she looked on, should have had
> An intimation how she bore herself
> Towards them, and to all creatures."—*Prelude*, xii. 165.

In book fourteen of the *Prelude* (243) the poet makes honourable confession to Dorothy:

"I too exclusively esteemed that love,
And sought that beauty which as Milton sings
Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
This over-sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!
My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
In her original self too confident,
Retained too long a countenance severe;
A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
And teach the little birds to build their nests
And warble in its chambers."

Let us turn to Humanity as seen through Dorothy's eyes.

A little girl comes from Coniston to beg, when there is cold in the air although the corn begins to show itself. Her stepmother had turned her out of doors; the father could not stay at home, "she flights so" (33). We go with Dorothy to a funeral at John Dawson's. About ten men and four women. Bread, cheese, and ale. They talk sensibly and cheerfully about common things. The dead person, fifty-six years of age, buried by the parish. The coffin is neatly lettered, and painted black, and covered with a decent cloth. They set the corpse down at the door. While Dorothy and her companions stand within the threshold, the men, with their hats off, and with decent and solemn countenances, sing a verse of a funeral psalm. The corpse is then borne down the hill and the singing goes on till Town-End is passed. Dorothy is affected to tears while standing in the house, the coffin lying before her. No kindred, no children. As they get out of the dark house, the sun shines, and the prospect looks divinely

beautiful—more sacred than ever, and yet more allied to human life. The green fields in the neighbourhood of the churchyard are as green as possible, and with the brightness of the sunshine look quite gay. Dorothy reflects—"She is going to a quiet spot," and cannot help weeping very much. When they reach the bridge (48), singing begins again, and they stop during four lines before entering the churchyard. [This is just a Norwegian funeral of to-day.] On a heavenly morning the Cockermouth traveller comes along with thread, hardware, mustard, &c. She is very healthy; has travelled over the mountains these thirty years. She does not mind the storms if she can keep her goods dry. Her husband will not travel with an ass, because it is the tramper's badge; she would have one to relieve her from the weary load. She is going to Ulverston, and is to return for Ambleside Fair (52). Next let us hear about the wife of a parson who brought up ten children upon a curacy, sent two sons to college, and left £1000 when he died. The wife was very generous, gave food and drink to all poor people. She had a passion for feeding animals. She killed a pig with feeding it over-much. When it was dead she said, "To be sure it's a great loss, but I thank God it did not die clemmed" (starved). Her husband was very fond of playing backgammon, and used to play whenever he could get anybody to play with him. She had played much in her youth, and was an excellent player; but her husband knew nothing of this, till one day she said to him, "You're fond of backgammon; come play with me!" He was surprised. She told him she had kept it to herself while

she had a young family to attend to, but that now she would play with him! So they began to play, and played every night (80). We see the single old Quakeress, living near Keswick, who goes by herself to meeting-house regularly every Sunday, and there sits and performs her worship alone, in that beautiful place among those fir trees of the spacious vale, under the great mountain Skiddaw (132). A poor woman comes a-begging, whose father lived to the age of 105. She is a woman of strong bones, with a complexion that has been beautiful, but now she is broken, and her little boy—a pretty little fellow—looks thin and pale. "Aye," says she, "we have all been ill. Our house was nearly unroofed in the storm, and we lived in it so for more than a week." The child wears a ragged drab coat and a fur cap. He seems scarcely grown since William and Dorothy met him in a lane going to Skelwith Bridge; he then looked very pretty, walking lazily in the deep, narrow lane overshadowed with the hedgerows, his meal poke hung over his shoulder. He had said that he "was going a-laiting" (begging for food). Poor creature! He now wears the same coat he had on when he was last met. The woman being gone, Dorothy cannot help thinking that we are not half thankful enough that we are placed in that condition of life in which we are (90). Aggy Fisher, called to attend upon Goan's dying infant, says, "There are many heavier crosses than the death of an infant;" and proceeds, "There was a woman in this vale who buried four grown-up children in one year, and I have heard her say, when many years

were gone by, that she had more pleasure in thinking of those four than of her living children, for as children get up and have families of their own, their duty to their parents wears out and weakens. She could trip lightly by the graves of those who died when they were young . . . as she went to church on a Sunday" (127). William on an April Saturday writes the poem of *The Beggar Woman*, taken from a woman whom Dorothy had seen two years before at Gallow Hill. After tea Dorothy reads out her account of "the little boy belonging to the tall woman," and an unlucky thing it is, for William cannot escape from these very words, and so is unable to write a poem upon the subject to his satisfaction, and goes tired to bed; but next morning (Sunday) he finishes *The Beggar Boy* (99).

On a February Tuesday, after ironing all day, Dorothy records how Mr. Graham was riding in a post-chaise and he heard a strange cry that he could not understand. The sound continued, and he called to the chaise-driver to stop. It was a little girl who was crying as if her heart would burst. She had got up behind the chaise, and her cloak had been caught by the wheel, and was jammed in, and it hung there. She was crying after it, poor thing. Mr. Graham took her into the chaise, and her cloak was released from the wheel, but the child's misery did not cease, for her cloak was torn to rags; it had been a miserable cloak before, but she had no other, and it was the greatest sorrow that could befall her. Her name was Alice Fell. She had no parents, and belonged to the next town. At that next town, Mr. G. left

money with some respectable people to buy her a new cloak (93).

The last item in this catalogue of women shall be given in full [39: compare Wordsworth's *Beggars*]:

"A very tall woman, tall much beyond the measure of tall women, called at the door. She had on a very long brown cloak and a very white cap, without bonnet. Her face was excessively brown, but it had plainly once been fair. She led a little barefooted child about two years old by the hand, and said her husband, who was a tinker, was gone before with the other children. I gave her a piece of bread. Afterwards on my way to Ambleside, beside the Bridge at Rydale, I saw her husband sitting by the roadside, his two asses feeding beside him, and the two young children at play upon the grass. The man did not beg. I passed on and about a quarter of a mile further I saw two boys before me, one about ten, the other about eight years old, at play chasing a butterfly. They were wild figures, not very ragged, but without shoes and stockings. The hat of the elder was wreathed round with yellow flowers, the younger, whose hat was only a rimless crown, had stuck it round with laurel leaves. They continued at play till I drew very near, and then they addressed me with the begging cant and the whining voice of sorrow. I said 'I served your mother this morning.' (The boys were so like the woman who had called at . . . that I could not be mistaken.) 'O!' says the elder, 'you could not serve my mother for she's dead, and my father's on at the next town—he's a potter.' I persisted in my assertion, and that I would give them nothing. Says the elder, 'Let's away,' and away they flew like lightning. They had, however, sauntered so long in their road that they did not reach Ambleside before me, and I saw them go up to Matthew Harrison's house with their wallet upon the elder's shoulder, and creeping with a beggar's complaining foot. On my return through Ambleside I met in the street the mother driving her asses, in the two panniers of one of which were the two little children, whom she was chiding and threatening with a wand which she used to drive on her asses, while the little things hung in wantonness over the pannier's edge. The woman had told me in the morning that she was of Scotland, which her accent fully proved, but that she had lived (I think) at Wigtoun, that they could not keep a house and so they travelled."

Among Dorothy's jottings about men and boys, let us note what is said about decaying Statesmen. John Fisher talks much about the alteration in the times, and observes that within a short period there will be only two ranks of people, the very rich and the very poor; "for those who have small estates," says he, "are forced to sell, and all the land goes into one hand" (33). Peggy Ashburner mourns that Thomas has sold his land to a dealer. "I have said many a time he's not come fra London to buy our land, however." Then she tells with what pains and industry they have made up their taxes, interest, &c. &c., how they all got up at five o'clock in the morning to spin, and Thomas carded, and they had paid off a hundred pounds of the interest. She used to take much pleasure in the cattle and sheep. "O how pleased I used to be when they fetched them down, and when I had been a bit poorly I would gang out upon a hill and look over t' fields and see them, and it used to do me so much good, you cannot think" (66).

There comes along a faint and pale sailor, travelling from Liverpool to Whitehaven, and he chats by the kitchen fire for two hours. His name is Isaac Chapel. By trade a sailmaker, and at sea since fifteen, he has just come from a voyage to the coast of Guinea. He had been on board a slave ship where one man had been killed. A boy put to lodge with the pigs and was half eaten, afterwards set to watch in the hot sun till he dropped down dead. Chapel has been away in North America and travelled thirty days among the Indians, where he had been well treated. He has twice swam from a King's ship

in the night and escaped. He says he would rather be in hell than be pressed (100).

Next in the kaleidoscope we come to a Highland carman with four carts, the first three belonging to himself, the last to some potters who had joined company with him. As the carman cheers his horses, he talks to a little lass of about ten years who seems to make him her companion. From the wall she wrests a large stone to support the wheel of one of his carts, and she runs on before with it in her arms to be ready for him (92):

"She was a beautiful creature, and there was something uncommonly impressive in the lightness and joyousness of her manner. Her business seemed to be all pleasure—pleasure in her own motions, and the man looked at her as if he too were pleased, and spoke to her in the same tone in which he spoke to his horses. There was a wildness in her whole figure, not the wildness of a Mountain lass, but of the Road lass, a traveller from her birth, who has wanted neither food nor clothes. Her mother followed the last cart with a lovely child, perhaps about a year old, at her back, and a good-looking girl, about fifteen years old, walked beside her. All the children were like the mother. She had a very fresh complexion, but she was blown with fagging up the steep hill, and with what she carried. Her husband was helping the horse to drag the cart up by pushing it with his shoulder."

When we read these descriptions in the full text, with all their unexpected freshness, we understand why Crabb Robinson declared that as a diarist Dorothy put him to shame. Here is Dorothy's jotting from which her brother composed *Resolution and Independence* (50):

"When William and I returned from accompanying Jones, we met an old man almost double. He had on a coat, thrown over his shoulders, above his waistcoat and coat. Under this he carried a bundle, and had an apron on and a night-cap. His

face was interesting. He had dark eyes and a long nose. John, who afterwards met him at Wytheburn, took him for a Jew. He was of Scotch parents, but had been born in the army. He had had a wife, and 'she was a good woman, and it pleased God to bless us with ten children.' All these were dead but one, of whom he had not heard for many years, a sailor. His trade was to gather leeches, but now leeches were scarce, and he had not strength for it. He lived by begging, and was making his way to Carlisle, where he should buy a few godly books to sell. He said leeches were very scarce, partly owing to this dry season, but many years they have been scarce. He supposed it owing to their being much sought after, that they did not breed fast, and were of slow growth. Leeches were formerly 2s 6d per 100; they are now 30s. He had been hurt in driving a cart, his leg broken, his body driven over, his skull fractured. He felt no pain till he recovered from his first insensibility. It was then late in the evening, when the light was just going away."

It is in depicting landscape—but this generally with short-sighted range of vision—that Dorothy's powers show even more brightly than in her notes about human beings. It is perhaps odd that neither William nor Dorothy has left us a good snowstorm, though William etched the sequel to such a storm in three lines:

> "High ridged, the whirléd drift has almost reached
> The powdered keystone of the churchyard post;
> Mute hangs the hooded bell; the tombs lie buried."

This is Dorothy's presentation of snow (70):

"All looked cheerful and bright. Helm Crag rose very bold and craggy, a Being by itself, and behind it was the large ridge of mountain, smooth as marble and snow-white. All the mountains looked like solid stone, on our left, going from Grasmere, *i.e.* White Moss and Nab Scar. The snow hid all the grass and all signs of vegetation, and the rocks showed themselves boldly everywhere, and seemed more stony than rock or stone. The birches on the crags beautiful, red, brown and glittering. The ashes, glittering spears with their upright stems. The hips very beautiful, and so good!! and, dear

Coleridge! I ate twenty for thee, when I was by myself. I came home first. They walked too slow for me. Wm. went to look at Langdale Pikes. We had a sweet, invigorating walk. Mr. Clarkson came in before tea. We played at cards. Sate up late. The moon shone upon the waters below Silver How, and above it hung, combining with Silver How on one side, a bowl-shaped moon, the curve downwards; the white fields, glittering roof of Thomas Ashburner's house, the dark yew tree, the white fields gay and beautiful. Wm. lay with his curtains open that he might see it."

On a lovely moonlight night Dorothy and her two brothers talk about a house on Helvellyn. The moonlight shines only upon the village; it does not eclipse the village candles, and the sound of dancing and merriment comes along the still air. Dorothy and William and Coleridge walk up the lane and by the church; and Dorothy lingers with Coleridge in the garden, when John and William are both gone to bed, and all the lights are out (48). John Green's house looks pretty under Silver How. As William and Dorothy move along, they are stopped at once, fifty yards from their favourite birch tree. It is yielding to the gusty wind with all its tender twigs. The sun shines upon it, and it glances in the wind like a flying sunshiny shower. It was a tree in shape, with stem and branches, but it is now like a spirit of water. The sun goes in, and the tree resumes its purplish appearance, twigs yielding to the wind, but not so visibly. The other birch trees near it look bright and cheerful, but it is a creature by its own self among them. . . . The weather clears. There is a rainbow which spans the lake from the island-house to the foot of Bainriggs. The village looks populous and beautiful. Catkins are coming out, palm trees budding; the alder, with its plum-coloured buds (65).

HELM CRAG, GRASMERE

In December Dorothy and Mary Hutchinson walk about in the green lane (69) behind the tailor's at Grasmere:

"The river came galloping past the church, as fast as it could come; and when we got into Easedale we saw Churn Milk Force, like a broad stream of snow at the little footbridge. We stopped to look at the company of rivers, which came hurrying down the vale, this way and that: a valley of streams and islands, with that great waterfall at the head, and lesser falls in different parts of the mountains, coming down to these rivers. We could hear the sound of the lesser falls, but could not see them. We walked backwards and forwards till all distant objects, except the white shape of the waterfall and the lines of the mountains, were gone. We had the crescent moon when we went out, and at our return there were a few stars that shone dimly, but it was a grey, cloudy night."

Dorothy's colour-sense on an August evening bids her remark on a curious yellow reflection on the water as of cornfields: no light in the clouds from which it appeared to come (46).

In October at Bainriggs (53) the oaks are noted as

"dark green with yellow leaves, the birches generally still green, some near the water yellowish, the sycamore crimson and crimson-tufted, the mountain ash a deep orange, the common ash lemon-colour, but many ashes still fresh in their peculiar green, those that were discoloured chiefly near the water."

On another October night the moon shines like herrings in the water (56). Four nights after this, in a tremendous wind, the snow blows from Helvellyn horizontally like white smoke (56). On a day after Christmas, Grasmere Lake is a beautiful image of stillness, clear as glass, reflecting all things; the wind is up, and the waters are sounding (74):

"The lake of a rich purple, the fields a soft yellow, the island yellowish-green, the copses red-brown, the mountains purple, the church and buildings, how quiet they were!"

In the beginning of Easter, Dorothy watches a robin chasing a scarlet butterfly—hint enough for William's poem *The Robin and the Butterfly* (109).

Rydal Mere is often the subject of description. Dorothy sits a long time one night to watch the hurrying waves, and to hear the regularly irregular sounds of the dashing waters. The waves round about the little island seem like a dance of spirits that have risen out of the water. In her walk, Dorothy receives Mrs. Nicholson's offer of company. This is very kind, but, God be thanked, Dorothy wants not society by a moonlit lake (36).

On a November night the church seems an image of peace, and William writes about it for the *Excursion*. Dorothy and Mary walk as far as the Wishing Gate, and stand there a long time. The mountains indistinct, the lake calm and partly ruffled. A sweet sound of water falling into the quiet lake. A storm is gathering in Easedale, yet the moon comes out, opening to them the church and village. Helm Crag in shade, the larger mountains dappled like a sky. The women stand long upon the bridge and wish for William (64).

In the next month, sitting in John's Grove, brother and sister watch the fading landscape. The lake seems brighter than when it is perfect day, and the island pushes itself upwards, distinct and large. All the shores marked. There is a sweet, sea-like sound in the trees over the observers' heads (94).

Again (102):

"As I climbed White Moss, the moon came out from behind a mountain mass of black clouds. O, the unutterable darkness of the sky, and the earth below the moon, and the

RYDAL WATER

glorious brightness of the moon itself! There was a vivid sparkling streak of light at this end of Rydale water, but the rest was very dark, and Loughrigg Fell and Silver How were white and bright, as if they were covered with hoar frost. The moon retired again, and appeared and disappeared several times before I reached home. Once there was no moonlight to be seen but upon the island-house and the promontory of the island where it stands. 'That needs must be a holy place,' &c. &c. I had many very exquisite feelings, and when I saw this lowly Building in the waters, among the dark and lofty hills, with that bright, soft light upon it, it made me more than half a poet. I was tired on reaching home, and could not sit down to reading. I tried to write verses, but alas! I gave up, expecting William, and went soon to bed."

As for the narrower things of home—Dorothy seems to have been as cheerful over the domesticities as over the lilies of the field. These things had to be done; and it is true (one ventures to state) that in the whole of Dorothy's Grasmere Diary there is not a murmur about the housework. She is delighted to paper William's room (44). She often mentions the day's ironing; spreads out the washed linen in the morning (45); sits on the wall making shifts until she can see no longer (45); cooks a chop for Coleridge (48); breaks away from the prospect from the orchard seat (most divinely beautiful; all colours melting into each other) to put the bread in the oven (54). She is fond of cards (56, 57), and very fond of ballads (27, 35, 36). Dorothy bought her ballad-book (Percy's *Reliques*) at Hamburg. Sometimes the cooking is suspended without any disturbance of the general temper. On an October Monday night, after working at the Sheepfold, and after a walk with the Lloyds, during which they stop to watch six glow-worms, brother and sister come home to find the fire out.

They just eat a kind of supper in the dark, and go to bed immediately (55). A sweet, lengthy letter arrives from Sarah Hutchinson, containing an interesting account of Patrick the pedlar. William and Dorothy, after reading that letter, cook no dinner, but sit a long time by the fire. They are occupied with food for thought; this letter of Sarah's is to be worked up for many a page of the *Excursion* (82). William, Mary, and Dorothy, on the 28th of December, set off on foot for Keswick with cold mutton in their pockets —but one of them also carrying Spenser's *Faerie Queene.* They lunch at a farm upon roasted apples (74). [Aye, this is Windy Brow over again. The true riches of Life are dirt-cheap.]

On an October evening, at Butterlip How, Dorothy and her brother have a pleasant conversation about the manners of the rich, avarice, inordinate desires, and the effeminacy, unnaturalness, and unworthy objects of education. Meanwhile the moonlight is spreading upon the hills like snow (50). The old "Domestic" sometimes appears on the scene, exulting in her own importance: "Aye, Mistress, them 'at's low laid would have been proud creatures, could they but have seen where I is now, fra what they thought wud be my doom" (97).

Tradition tells that when Sir Walter Scott and the Ettrick Shepherd visited the Wordsworths, they had to seek at the neighbouring inns refreshments to the need of which the poet and his sister seemed oblivious. Yet in the Grasmere Diary alcohol is not absurdly absent. One day, on a long field journey, Dorothy partakes of a little brandy, and feels in Heaven (117). It is something of a shock to find that after

GREEN-HEAD GHYLL

(Site of Michael's sheepfold)

GOWBARROW, ULLSWATER

(Beginning of daffodil-time)

William and Dorothy have enjoyed their famous vision of the daffodils at Gowbarrow Park, they sit down to an old volume of Congreve's *Plays* and comfort themselves with a glass of warm rum and water (107). Dorothy reasonably deplores the expense of receiving letters. Between the 1st of December and the 27th of the following January she had paid out £1, 11s. 3d. for letters (83). The carriage of books must also have been a costly affair. Such a box of books arrives on February 1st: from it Dorothy draws *The Pleasures of Hope*. She reads from this to William by his bedside. He cannot fall asleep. The next day, after tea, Dorothy reads out the eleventh book of *Paradise Lost*. They are much impressed, and even melted into tears. Soon after Dorothy has laid aside the book the newspapers come in, which is a good thing for her William (86).

We must not pause long on the presence of Coleridge in Lakeland at this time. His mind is unproductive. The serenity of Dove Cottage is in marked contrast to the atmosphere of the Coleridge home at Keswick. Mrs. Coleridge is jealous of Dorothy. Her range of thought is indicated by ejaculations such as "The cow is about to calve"; "The cow does not eat"; "The cow must be ill"; "We shall lose the cow"; "Southey earns such and such, and my husband, with his superior talents, never bestirs himself," &c. (Brandl's *Life of Coleridge*).

Infinitely touching, the coming and going—the moth-like night-fluttering of Coleridge over the mountains between Keswick and Grasmere. Comparison may be made between Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* and Coleridge's *Ode*

to Dejection (stanza 6)—"There was a time." The eighth stanza of *Dejection* was in its earlier form addressed to Wordsworth. It is desolating to think of Coleridge upon these mountains in the dark nights, eating out his heart and surrounded by such "viper thoughts" as he refers to in the seventh stanza—into which, however, the whistling wind unexpectedly brings the name and story of Lucy Gray:

> "A tale of less affright
> And tempered with delight,
> As Otway's self had framed the tender lay;
> 'Tis of a little child
> Upon a lonesome wild,
> Not far from home, but she had lost her way,
> And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
> And now screams loud, and hopes to make her
> mother hear."

Strength of frail womanhood! Dorothy has to "give out" from her very life-blood not only to William, but to the other clinging brother, Samuel Taylor Coleridge! The postman from Ambleside—that steady, unmurmuring cripple, mechanised to his labour—hands Dorothy a letter on the road. It is from Coleridge. Dorothy unseals it, and has just light enough to decipher whether he is ill. She puts the letter in her pocket. At the top of White Moss she takes it to her bosom—a safer place for it. The night is wild, with a strange mountain lightness as she passes John's Grove. The wind roars right out of the Grove, all the trees tossing about. William is ill, and goes to bed after he and Dorothy have written a joint letter to Coleridge. William has left Dorothy with a little peat fire. It grows less. She goes to bed, and cannot sleep from sheer cold. [One

fears there is something, throughout this entry, of a frost in the heart. The passage, after a forced reference to pies and bread, and then a return to Coleridge, ends thus—] "*N.B.* The moon came out suddenly when we were at John's Grove, and a star or two besides" (87). Another letter from Coleridge—a sad, melancholy letter—arrives when Mary is in the cottage; it prevents them all from sleeping (68). Coleridge, oh, how many reasons Dorothy has to be anxious about this friend (she says)! Every sight and every sound reminds her of him—dear, dear fellow, of his many talks by day and night, of all dear things! Dorothy is melancholy and unfit for conversation, and at last eases her heart by weeping —nervous blubbering, says William (64). On a May evening William and Dorothy are sitting at the table, writing, when they are roused by Coleridge's voice below. He has walked; looks paleish, but is not much tired. They all sit together till one o'clock; William goes to bed, and the others talk on till a quarter-past two o'clock (120).

It would only be painful to the world if the wives and sisters and secretaries of men of genius were to make a practice of diarising about the creative moods of these great men. To God should be left ecstasies and agonies with which the world is meant to be comforted as song. Dorothy, writing because she cannot help it, and truly for no eyes but those of her nearest kin, reveals to us poetry-in-the-making as no other person has revealed it. In some of her pages we see how she and her brother find the very materials of poetry. Other pages picture to us the poet possessed by his subjects. Let us be grateful, for once,

to watch this process—and grateful that it is gracious, loving Dorothy who lifts the veil.

On a November Wednesday, William and Dorothy and Sarah (for thus is that lady's baptismal name officially recorded, though Dorothy prefers "Sara") walk up sunny, snowy Easedale. A letter comes from Mary. The Lloyds arrive for tea. The three hosts accompany the Lloyds to Ambleside. Sarah and Dorothy walk home in a beautiful moonlight night. Whither has the poet disappeared? We are not told. The jotting ends by remarking that William is very well, and highly poetical (58). Two pages further we find that Dorothy and Sarah walk as far as Thirlmere with Coleridge, who is on his way to Keswick. Returning home, they find that William is not well, because he has been labouring unsuccessfully (60). On Sunday evening, November 22nd, Dorothy notices the moon and the moonlight seen through hurrying driving clouds immediately behind the Stone-Man upon the top of the hill. Every tooth and every edge of rock is visible, and the Man stands like a giant watching from the roof of a lofty castle. The hill seems perpendicular from the darkness below it (66). Two days before Christmas, while Mary is writing out the *Tales from Chaucer* for Coleridge, William is working at *The Ruined Cottage*, and makes himself very ill (73). Exactly a month after this, William and Dorothy come struggling through the wind from Eusemere. Often they have to rest by the way. A hail-shower meets them before they reach the tarn, and the way is difficult over the snow; but at the tarn the view closes in. Nothing but mists and snow. At first the ice on the tarn below them

DUNGEON GHYLL, LANGDALE

cracks and splits, yet without water, a dull grey white. They lose their path and can see the tarn no longer. They make their way out with difficulty, guided by a heap of stones which they well remember. They are afraid of being bewildered in the mists till the darkness overtakes them. They are puzzled to learn if they are in the right track, but thanks to William's skill, they know it long before they can see their way before them. There is no footmark upon the snow, either of man or of beast. Four sheep are noticed before the snow region is left. When the mists break away, the vale of Grasmere looks soft and grave, of a yellow hue. It is dark before the travellers reach home. When they have got off their wet clothes, they sit by the fire, read a description of the Lake of Como, talk about it, look about them, and feel that they are happy (81).

No letter from Coleridge. Dorothy writes to him. Brother and sister (83) sit by the fire and are happy, only their tender thoughts become painful. [Compare *Lines written in Early Spring*—

> "In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
> Bring sad thoughts to the mind."]

Two days afterwards, William is very unwell, worn out with his bad night's rest. Dorothy reads to him, endeavouring to make him sleep. Then she goes into the other room to compose herself with the first book of *Paradise Lost*. A few hours later comes a heartrending letter from Coleridge, and they are sad as they could be (83). Next day William chops wood and Dorothy carries it to the house in a basket. William asks Dorothy to set down the

story of Barbara Wilkinson's Turtle-Dove. Barbara is an old maid. She had two turtle-doves. One of them died the first year. The other continued to live alone in its cage for nine years, but for one whole year it had a companion and daily visitor—a little mouse that used to come and feed with it; and the dove would carry it and cover it over with its wings, and make a loving noise to it. The mouse, though it did not testify equal delight in the dove's company, was yet at perfect ease. The poor mouse disappeared, and the dove was left solitary till its death. It died of a short sickness, and was buried under a tree with funeral ceremony by Barbara and her maidens, and one or two others (84). After the chopping of wood, William works at *The Pedlar* all morning. He keeps the dinner waiting till four o'clock. He is much tired. The next day he is still tired, having slept ill, and he walks round the two lakes with Dorothy. They sit by the wayside at the foot of Grasmere Lake, close to Mary's dear name, which she had herself cut upon the stone. William cuts at it with his knife to make it plainer (84). On page 86 we find William restless over his *Pedlar*, and three separate times in one day Dorothy reads to soothe him. Within a day or two, William, thinking he has done with *The Pedlar*, finds fault with one part of it, after all. It is uninteresting, and must be altered. "Poor William!" (87). On February 14th William hands Dorothy alterations to carry out in *The Pedlar*, and is tempted by the fine day to set off and see Mary at Penrith. So away he goes in his blue spencer and a pair of new pantaloons fresh from London (91). Dorothy spends a whole day ironing (16th February).

William comes back just at tea-time. He had only seen Mary H. for a couple of hours between Eamont Bridge and Hartshorn Tree. [Note that William always seems to dislike entering Penrith] (93). The robins are busy. Now for a walk; Dorothy will be busy. She will look well and be well, when William comes back from Calvert's. O the Darling! Here is one of his bitter apples. Dorothy can hardly find it in her heart to throw it in the fire. . . . She walks round the two lakes; sits down where they always sit. Full of thoughts of her darling. Blessings on him! (97). William goes up into the orchard and finishes *The Emigrant Mother*. Dorothy walks backward and forward with the poet till dinner-time. He reads her his poem. She later reads to him, till the Beloved sleeps (101). William repeats part of his new poem, *The Cuckoo*. In twenty minutes he has come in rather tired with attempting to write. He is now reading Ben Jonson. Dorothy is going to read German. It is about ten o'clock, a quiet night. The fire flickers, and the watch ticks. Dorothy hears nothing save the breathing of the Beloved as he now and then pushes his book forward, and turns over a leaf (103). Dorothy walks from Eusemere to Yanwath for letters, and receives one from William and Mary. A sharp, windy night. Thomas Wilkinson comes back with Dorothy as far as Barton, questioning. Every question [about Mary?] is like the snapping of a little thread about her heart. Full of thought about her half-read letter and other things Dorothy is glad when Wilkinson leaves her. She has time to look at the moon while thinking her own thoughts. At this moment [so it will be found, next

day] William is riding *by himself*, between Middleham and Barnard Castle (105). [12th April, 1802; William has been away to visit Mary: his marriage will come off in October.] On an April Thursday, brother and sister visit John's Grove. After sitting awhile they lie in the trench under the fence—William with his eyes shut, and listening to the waterfalls and the birds. There is no waterfall above another—it is a sound of waters in the air—the voice of the air. William hears his sister breathing, and rustling now and then, but both lie still, and unseen by one another. He thinks that it would be sweet thus to lie in the grave, to hear the peaceful sounds of the earth, and just to know that dear friends were near. The lake is still; there is no boat out. Silver How is reflected with delicate purple and yellowish hues like those of spar; lambs on the island, and running races together by the half-dozen, in the round field near. The copses greenish, hawthorns green, . . . cottages smoking. As Dorothy lay down on the grass, she observed the glittering silver line on the ridge of the backs of the sheep, owing to their situation respecting the sun, which made them look beautiful, but with something of strangeness, like animals of another kind, as if belonging to a more splendid world (114). William has slept uncommonly well, so feeling himself strong, falls to work at *The Leech Gatherer:* writes hard at it till dinner-time, then gives over, tired to death—he has finished the poem (119). But the poem is not really finished. William works at it two days afterwards almost incessantly from morning till tea-time. Dorothy is oppressed and sick at heart, for he wearies himself to

death. After tea he writes two stanzas in the manner of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* and is tired out. The day before, in the orchard, while reading Henry V. with Dorothy, he lay back on his seat and wept (119). In Brothers' Wood the pair walk up and down, William tiring himself in seeking an epithet for the cuckoo (121). On May 21st William writes two sonnets on Buonaparte, after his sister has read Milton's sonnets to him (123). After tea (June 20th) brother and sister walk in their own path for a long time, and talk sweetly together about the disposal of their riches. [Lord Lonsdale has paid a long-standing debt to the family incurred by his predecessor. It is this altered state of circumstances that allows the poet to think of marriage as near.] After this talk William and Dorothy lie on the sloping turf. Earth and sky are so lovely that they melt the heart of both (133). On Monday, October 1802 [the very day on which Coleridge causes his *Ode to Dejection* toappear in the *Morning Post*], William is married to Mary Hutchinson at Gallow Hill. Dorothy had slept a good deal of the night, and rose fresh and well. At a little after eight o'clock, she saw them go down the avenue towards the church. William had parted with her upstairs. While they were absent, dear little Sarah had prepared the breakfast. Dorothy keeps herself as quiet as she can, but when she sees two men running up the walk, coming to tell that all is over, she can stand it no longer, and throws herself on the bed, where she lies in stillness, neither hearing nor seeing anything till Sarah arrives upstairs and says, "They are coming." This forces Dorothy from the bed and she moves faster than her

strength can carry her till she falls on the bosom of her beloved William. . . . It rains when William and Mary *and Dorothy* set off. Poor Mary is much agitated to part from her brothers and sisters and her home. Nothing particular occurs till they reach Kirby. . . . They go to the churchyard, saunter about, and read the gravestones (148). At six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, October 6th, William, Mary, and Dorothy arrive at Dove Cottage. They go by candle-light into the garden (154), and are astonished at the growth of the brooms and the Portugal laurels.

CHAPTER XIX

WHAT DID GRASMERE TEACH WORDSWORTH?

Among celebrated diaries, Dorothy's Journal is unrivalled for sincerity. Now, in these Grasmere pages we are far from finding that the Lakeland folk have captured or recaptured the affections of the poet and his sister. Dorothy's entries seldom mention the Dalesfolk. Oftener they are occupied with casual wayfarers, to whom the curiosity of brother and sister goes out as if they were enduring a quiet repellance from the minds of their neighbours. The *Prelude* (xiii. 157) says:

> "The *lonely roads*
> Were open schools in which I daily read
> *With most delight* the passions of mankind."

Local feelings rank among the strongest prejudices, however disguised, of communities divided one from another by hills. If the Langdale people of a Sunday walked down to Grasmere Church, round which their dead lay buried, Langdale had to be content with entering by the little west door; the big door was for Grasmere. Grasmere held Keswick in contempt. "Nowt good comes ower t' Gap" (Dunmail Raise). It cannot be thought that William and Dorothy Wordsworth quite despised the people of Westmorland; but put it the other way—Grasmere was unwilling, perhaps, to be taught or inspected by Cockermouth. From these pages we do not gather that

William, or even Dorothy, entered intimately into the joys and sorrows, the simple feasts and marriages and fairs of the valley. On the one hand, their conscious occupation with the high and enduring things perhaps left little room in the minds of brother and sister for any deep curiosity about surrounding fellow-beings. On the other hand, the reticence of the Dalesfolk, which lies almost as suspiciousness beneath the accompanying courtesy, must have been reinforced by the apparent aimlessness, the gipsy-like conduct, and the want of external religiosity in these young strangers, brought thither by no ties of friendship, and visited by no relatives.

Mayhap the enjoyment of simplicity too much predisposed the Wordsworths to hold that happiness lies most with the simply-housed and poor. Often a tramp, sometimes a cottager, very occasionally a yeoman like Wilkinson: these are the human figures in the Diary. One single entry startles us into remembrance of a more moneyed world, which pride in these days caused the Wordsworths to avoid: "A coroneted landau went by when we were sitting upon the sodded wall." In their own persons these happy recluses vindicated plain living and high thinking; yet most of us acknowledge that many a man has exhibited amid the subdued hum of universities, or amid the hurries of parliamentary life, or even amid the graces of a court, the truth enunciated by that Wordsworthian backwoodsman, Thoreau: "I am often reminded that although I had the wealth of Crœsus, my wants would be the same, and my means would remain the same." There is no blessing on the poor except to such of them as preserve the grace of being poor in

spirit—a grace not seldom exemplified by men and women who do not feel themselves shut up to live in cottages, or even to spend their lives in remote valleys.

But it was given to the Wordsworths to be doubly "poor in spirit"; they were content to be humble as the poorest in the service of humanity, and in that service they were also well content with the loneliness in which the unthinking portion of the world is only too ready to leave those who endure poverty.

Brother John Wordsworth chose himself a glade in the wood near Wishing Gate, and there he paced up and down with quarter-deck step, perhaps ruminating his sea-world all the time—until he wore for himself a path, reverenced by his great relatives after he was drowned in the Channel. William Wordsworth, walking up and down the Grasmere valley, is just as lonely as John was. He is at sea also. His mind is like his ship of the sonnet—

> "Neither friend nor foe
> She cares for; let her travel where she may
> She finds familiar names, a beaten way
> Ever before her, and a wind to blow."

This is not hinting that the poet was devoid of heart-beat under his admittedly cold manner. Crabb Robinson writes, "When we were on that noble spot, the Amphitheatre at Nismes, I observed his eyes fixed in a direction where there was the least to be seen; and walking that way, I beheld two very young children at play with flowers, and overheard him say to himself, 'Oh! you darlings, I wish I could put you in my pocket and carry you to Rydal Mount.'" Also we know Wordsworth's letter to Sir George Beaumont

in which he says, "For my part, strip my neighbourhood of human beings, and I should think it one of the greatest privations I could undergo. You have all the poverty of solitude—nothing of its elevation." Yet is not this just the artist writing to an artist, rather than the poet confessing his soul, as in our quotation on page 225 of this work he appears?

At all times Wordsworth was pleased enough to be left with himself. His native Cumberland holds this maxim in regard to newcomers settling in a district: "Summer thim, and winter thim, and summer thim agen." He would not have been unpleased to meet this test, with that dignity which, the *Excursion* tells us, is bestowed upon a man's life by "an introverted spirit."

Wordsworth arrived at Grasmere with his collection of ideas about man tolerably complete, though some of them were not very old. The Dalesfolk, so far as they were useful in illustrating these ideas, were welcomed to his mind; otherwise they were unimportant. We cannot perceive that from any individual inhabitant of the Dales or from their whole corporate wisdom, Wordsworth has rescued for us one new impulse. Michael and other such characters belong as much to Somerset or Normandy as to Westmorland. In fact, as regards *Michael*, the poet's own hand intimates to Thomas Poole of Somerset, "in writing it I had your character often before my eyes." "Margaret" also hails from Dorset or Somerset. We conclude that the high-mindedness of William and Dorothy Wordsworth never cared to draw from the people around them the coarser commonplaces of thought and action which form

the staple of their vernacular poetry. William and Dorothy naturally evoked the best—and thought still better of it, for that was their occupation. The process already named as "enveloping" may be traced in three ascending stages. Take first the people, their thoughts and pleasures and habits, as set forth in Chapter XV. of this book, a chapter largely compiled from many works written by natives of the two counties. This is part of the truth, but no doubt with some fine latent qualities undivined. Then ascend to the unsuperstitious, broad-minded, and comparatively cosmopolitan common people, as you find them in the Journal. Here you see the divining, admixed doubtless with a little of the enveloping. From these, in turn, ascend to the Dalesmen ideally compounded and "treated" in the poems of Wordsworth. Here is clearly the enveloping. It was to reach this point of view that pains were taken to accumulate the material for Chapter XV., the length of which, except for some such object, would have been unjustifiable. It is Bonamy Price who reads *Michael* every year, not the Dalesman. The Dalesman will believe what he hears when you tell him in Wordsworth's plain prose that this poem is "an attempt to picture a man of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated . . . by parental affection and the love of landed property." If, after the manner of a Burns, Wordsworth had in *Michael* started a man from the soil who was at once recognisable by Dalesmen as a particular neighbour—really one of themselves—and then they had been led to see that this particular type happened to illustrate the Universal, well and good. A series of

such presentments would have endeared Wordsworth to the Dalesmen. But the method of Wordsworth is the reverse of Burns's. He finds a universal principle to illustrate, and next manipulates local experience with abstract skill until a concrete picture of humanity is produced, marvellously accordant with the deep harmonies of life, but not a person on whom Dalesfolk could "put a name." Both in his handling of scenery and in his handling of humanity—from the days of *Matthew* onwards—our poet claimed the right to alter and "compose" for his own effects. And this is surely why, while he edifies the broad world, Lakeland itself, so far as the majority of its denizens are concerned, still suffers his spirit in these vales to wander lonely as a cloud. These people look into this poetry for their "likes" and are disquieted by symbols. It is being put off with ghosts.

During the three years of life at Grasmere, practically covered by Dorothy's Journal, Wordsworth wrote seventy-two poems. Of these, only eight make any show of being studies of people met in the vale. They are *The Brothers*, *Michael*, *The Idle Shepherd Boys*, *The Pet Lamb*, *The Sailor's Mother*, *Beggars*, *Alice Fell*, *Resolution and Independence*. The first of these seems to be a recollection of a story told to the poet in Cumberland about the Pillar Rock. The second (see page 282) is composite, not veritably delineating any person of the neighbourhood. The third poem is of slight merit, and its boys have no recognisable individuality. The fourth was composite. "Barbara Lewthwaite was not in fact the child whom I had seen and overheard as described in this poem." The fifth and sixth poems deal with

passing mendicants. The subject of the seventh ("Alice Fell") did not belong to the district, and Wordsworth had never seen her. The subject of the eighth was an old vagrant to whom Wordsworth "gave powers of mind which the original did not possess": and the background of scenery is compounded from no less than four places, a pool near Dove Cottage, the ridge of Moor Divock, Ullswater Fells near Askham, and White Moss Common. That is all there is to show of Wordsworth's interest in his neighbours, while Dorothy was writing her Journal.

Turning to external Nature, we inquire, had Nature, then—external Nature—any special revelation for Wordsworth awaiting him in the Lakeland round Grasmere? The answer is rather No than Yes. Wordsworth had written both exquisite poems of human endurance (like *The Old Cumberland Beggar*) and some of his deepest Nature-poems (like *Tintern Abbey*) before he entered into possession of Lakeland at Grasmere. Dorothy's nature-perceptions were as keen at Alfoxden as they were at Grasmere. Look, for instance, at this jotting from the Alfoxden Diary:

"We rose early. A thick fog obscured the distant prospect entirely, but the shapes of the nearer trees and the dome of the wood dimly seen and dilated. It cleared away between ten and eleven. The shapes of the mist, slowly moving along, exquisitely beautiful; passing over the sheep they almost seemed to have more of life than those quiet creatures. The unseen birds singing in the mist."

Wordsworth and his sister came into Lakeland, ready, long-schooled, finished in their schooling.

"Yet were I grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this earth
So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell *among the hills where I was born.*
If *in my youth* I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is yours;
. . . . . .
the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion."

—*Prelude*, ii. 421.

The thoughts of the boy on Penrith Beacon come to us again: "The days gone by return upon me almost from life's dawn, and I see the hiding place of man's power open." Lakeland was a God's Gift to the brother and sister in being an assemblage of quiet valleys filled with all such beauties as their minds had been trained to note. Forms like these had been intuitively conned, subconsciously assimilated, at Cockermouth, by both. Wordsworth, through his larger experiences, his travels among the passions of men, is able to moralise humanity as Dorothy never does, and draws deductions from the manifestations of external Nature as Dorothy never does. Dorothy remains unchanged, with no wish to change, the child of Cockermouth, taught by Derwent and Skiddaw to love colour and sound

and harmonies of motion. Back to Derwent and Skiddaw we must go for the deeper influences of master-passion which thrill through Wordsworth's finest poetry. See the *Prelude* (viii. 100, 300, and 252) for the metal of *Michael* at white heat from recollection of boyhood. Compare the careful, frigid descriptive work in which the poet, no longer distinctly recollective, contemplates the Dalesfolk from Helvellyn, in the opening of the same book.

Therefore there never could have been, and never was, a "Lake School of Poetry." If ever there was any congress of more than two poetic minds that might be thus called, it must be defined by an Irishism; it existed only in the years 1798, 1799, at Alfoxden in Somersetshire, where there are no lakes. The school of Lakeland thought, as that thought was developed at Grasmere, consisted of two pupils, Dorothy Wordsworth and William Wordsworth, and their teacher had been the river Derwent.

> "Starting from this point,
> I had my face turned toward the truth, began
> With an advantage furnished by that kind
> Of prepossession, without which the soul
> Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,
> No genuine insight ever comes to her."
>
> —*Prelude*, viii. 322.

It can surely never happen again that a poet will discover for himself a virgin region of beauty like this Lakeland. Yet while Wordsworth is ready to stoop with Dorothy and read, in the meanest Lakeland flower that blows, thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears, Heaven gave the poet also power to rise in worship to that Whole of Beauty upon whose ear Lakeland is but a little jewel. It is begging the

question to affirm, as it sometimes is affirmed, that Wordsworth was a poet only for a small tract and a temperate clime. At Cockermouth he was endowed with an extra sense of Nature that would have established amazing correspondences between his mind and the "banks of the Susquehanna," or any region more tropical than that cool stream, if he had arrived there with Coleridge and Southey and the other Pantisocratists.

AIREY FORCE, ULLSWATER

CHAPTER XX

THE CHILD IS FATHER OF THE MAN

The mountain echoes of Lakeland framed their songs and catches out of the bleat of a lamb or the boding of a raven ; but they had never wakened to a trumpet's tone. Nay, we have to qualify such a statement by admitting that at the Reformation these echoes did faintly stir—

> "In that glorious time
> When Learning, like a stranger come from afar
> Sounding through Christian lands her trumpet, roused
> Peasant and King."

But the ballad-blare that stung the blood of Sir Philip Sidney was lost in our mountains, and the only form of patriotism to be found among them was merely the zest of a handful of men for tribal independence. It is therefore a matter of thankfulness for us that Wordsworth, in years largely covered by his occupancy of Dove Cottage, used poesy to express manly feeling for the widest interests of England, so that in his hands, hardly less than in Milton's,

> "The thing became a trumpet."

Some ten or twelve of Wordsworth's poems about Liberty and Independence will stand, still appealing to every class of mind, when nearly all the over-minute nature-etchings in the *Excursion* have been

relegated to the cabinets of critics. Here was the lesson, learnt at Cockermouth, emerging in its highest truth—the love of Liberty passed into songs of Duty. Yet most of these bugle-alarms sounded for England's Independence, though belonging to the Dove Cottage period, were uttered far away from Grasmere. It is almost with misgiving that, as we proudly ponder this body of national poetry given to us by Wordsworth during the Napoleonic struggle, we come upon that sonnet of narrower range—*Composed by the Side of Grasmere Lake in 1807*—which reminds us of the Lakelanders' worst shortcoming, their pre-occupation within their native pastoral limits :

> "List! a voice is near;
> Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
> 'Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
> Ravage the world, tranquillity is here.'"

In his later periods Wordsworth was felicitous in using classic lore, though sparingly, to illustrate home scenery or English feeling. *On the Power of Sound* contains this second reference to the god of fruitful peace :

> "The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
> Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
> Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards,
> That in high triumph drew the Lord of Vines,
> How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
> While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
> In cadence,—and Silenus swang
> This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned."

There are portions of the *Prelude* which convey a sense of the "growth of a Poetic Mind" through natural rapture as free as the spirit of the lines just

BLEA TARN FARM

(Home of the Solitary, in *The Excursion*)

quoted. But how does *The Power of Sound* proceed? Its next words are these:

> "To life, to *life* give back thine ear:
> Ye who are longing to be rid
> Of fable, though to truth subservient, hear
> The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
> Echoed from the coffin lid;
> The convict's summons in the steeple's knell;
> 'The vain distress-gun,' from a leeward shore,
> Repeated—heard, and heard no more!"

Such is not "life," as we anywhere meet it in the *Prelude;* but the feeling of this passage verberates through the *Excursion:* say what Wordsworth will about the immortalities, the strongest impression derived from the *Excursion* is of the grave. The Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor are old men (and their poetic interlocutor speaks to them also like an old man) drawn together by a funeral cortège and a churchyard; old men—they give one the impression of four down-gazing Wordsworths with green shades over their eyes—trying to hearten each other against Death. The *Excursion* is not comparable, in power to break fresh intellectual ground, with the *Prelude.* The fourth book of the *Excursion* contains at least two glorious outbursts, perhaps worthy of Milton at his best; yet the title of that book is applicable to the whole work—"Despondency Corrected"; and the circumstances and manner in which the self-complacent Pastor "corrects" the wide world, at the end of the ninth book, must be to many minds wholly unacceptable. Often, as Coleridge pointed out, our author in this poem labours precisely at a bit of landscape which would be better

rendered, not by three hundred words, but by half-a-dozen strokes of an artist's pencil. The inevitableness of the recurring landscape-illustrations in the *Excursion* discounts pleasure. Descriptions like the Sunrise in book two (830), executed at second hand from a friend's experiences, and piling up metaphors about the glory of the skies from the domes and turrets of earth, may have their gorgeousness, yet leave us unsatisfied and disconcerted. Probably one of the deftest and truest pieces of fancy in the poem is the Pastor's reflection upon Grasmere Churchyard (v. 526):

> "We safely may affirm that human life
> Is either fair and tempting, a soft scene
> Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
> Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view;
> Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
> Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
> With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
> Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
> Hath gained its noontide height, this churchyard, filled
> With mounds transversely lying side by side
> From east to west, before you will appear
> An unillumined, blank, and dreary plain,
> With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
> Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
> Look, from the quarter whence the lord of light,
> Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
> His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
> Upon the southern side of every grave
> Have gently exercised a melting power;
> Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye
> All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
> Hopeful and cheerful:—Vanished is the pall
> That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,
> Vanished or hidden; and the whole domain,
> To some, too lightly minded, might appear
> A meadow carpet for the dancing hours."

GRASMERE CHURCH

This poem is strewn with curious felicities of sententiousness, for Wordsworth was ever prolific of high thoughts tersely detached, in exquisitely chosen words, from his main argument. Of nature-glimpses vouchsafed in this poem through this same medium of condensed language, we have—to choose among many lovely things—the Youth viewing from the Athol hills an ocean sunrise (poetically, for geographically the thing was impossible):

> "Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise."
>
> (i. 215);

The address to the Creator:

> "Thou, who didst wrap the cloud
> Of infancy around us, that thyself,
> Therein, with our simplicity awhile
> Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed;
> Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
> Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
> And touch as gentle as the morning light,
> Restor'st us daily."
>
> (iv. 83);

Atmospheric effects among the hills:

> "The mists,
> Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
> And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
> As fast as a musician scatters sound
> Out of an instrument."
>
> (iv. 520);

The drama of the fields:

> "Ah, what a warning for a thoughtless man,
> Could field or grove, could any spot on earth,
> Show to his eye an image of the pangs
> Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo
> Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod!"
>
> (vi. 806);

And animal life in tranquillity:

> "By happy chance we saw
> A two-fold image; on a grassy bank
> A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
> Another and the same!"
>
> (ix. 439).

It has never been clearly pointed out that in Wordsworth's early disgust at the horrors of war lies the real genesis of the *Excursion*. When Wordsworth was a boy of twelve, at Hawkshead (1782), England's humiliated soldiers were returning from our unfortunate war with America. He was eighteen when, on the ridge of the Hawkshead road between the two Sawreys, he met the patient soldier, outworn by service in "the Tropic Islands," who poured out to him his moving tale (*Prelude*, iv. 387) of "war, battle, and pestilence." In 1793, when he was in his twenty-fourth year, he watched our fleet assembling at Portsmouth for the commencement of the struggle with France. His note to *Guilt and Sorrow* gives us his state of mind then: "I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle . . . I was assured in my own mind, would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation." While thus his early thoughts continued to be occupied with the desolations of war in contrast to battle's romantic side, the poet was repeatedly drawn to contemplate the soldier's profession as affecting the lives of women. At a time of life when many a singer would have been driven uncontrollably from lyric passion to lyric passion among lovely mistresses, Wordsworth's heart was

engrossed with pity for the wretched wives and widows of men whose blood was sucked by war. In the first of his published poems—*An Evening Walk*, finished in 1789—the single human figure is the soldier's relict, and this woman is undoubtedly a sketch that led to *Margaret*. *The Female Vagrant* (1791-94, later expanded into *Guilt and Sorrow*) should be studied in its original form, as printed in *Lyrical Ballads*. There we have a story conceived on Salisbury Plain, based on "the calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject." The imaginary heroine of this poem is bred in happiness on the farm of her yeoman father, on the banks of Derwentwater. A rich absentee-landlord of the neighbourhood forces ruin upon the farmer's freehold. Father and daughter leave their "hereditary nook" for a distant town, where the girl weds a poor artist, who enlists for the American war, taking with him the brave young wife who soon falls into the miseries of widowhood and destitution. *Her Eyes are Wild* (1798) and *Ruth* (1799) are similar studies of warfare seen through the minds of stricken women among the poor. In this same period of Alfoxden (1798), Wordsworth completed *Margaret:* that marvellous study of a forsaken woman brooding amid the half-rejected lovelinesses of nature. Margaret mourns a soldier-husband, whose fate is thus referred to by the poet: "I was born too late to have a distinct remembrance of the origin of the American war; but the state in which I represent Robert's mind to be, I had frequent opportunities of observing at the commencement of our rupture with France in 1793." The character of

"Margaret," we know, was drawn originally from a woman of Dorset or Somerset. The embryo of the story was the passage beginning (*Excursion*, i. 871)

"Nine tedious years"

and ending (916)

"Last human tenant of these ruined walls."

Wordsworth observes of this section: "Composed in '95 at Racedown; and for several passages describing the employment and demeanour of Margaret during her affliction, I was indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire, and afterwards at Alfoxden, where I resided in '97 and '98."

It was from the materials thus gathered for "Margaret" that Wordsworth began (Note that *The Prelude*, finished in 1805, was still in hand) to elaborate a larger poem which he and Dorothy called *The Pedlar*. From December of 1801 to February of 1802, Dorothy's Journal contains fifteen allusions to the poet's toil over *The Pedlar*, which ultimately became the first two books of a still larger work finally designated by the general name of *The Excursion*. The first two books are the best. Nearly all the remainder of the great poem was composed amid the discomforts of Allan Bank. Coleridge did not think highly of the *Excursion* as a whole, but of the story of Margaret, comprising so much of the first book, he declared that it was "superior . . . to anything in our language which in any way resembles it."

We have seen, then, that the real origin of the *Excursion* lies in Alfoxden meditations against war expanded in the earliest years of the Wordsworths

at Dove Cottage. Now, as to that large portion of the poem (seven books) which was still to be written when the Wordsworths had enjoyed ample opportunity of becoming intimate with their neighbours, what are we to say? If the poet was learning much from the Dalesfolk of Grasmere during these years, we should expect to find his impressions of these neighbours in the *Excursion*, if anywhere. James Russell Lowell, on a page to which this book is indebted for its title, seems to suggest that he looked upon our poet as closely associated with those denizens of the valleys around him. "He had a fondness for particulars, and there are parts of his poems which remind us of local histories in the undue relative importance given to trivial matters. He was the historian of Wordsworthshire." If Lowell is to be taken as supposing that Wordsworth particularises about these neighbours, and if this supposition be correct, the *Excursion* must be a chronicle of people in and around Grasmere. The poem, be it noted, observes the classic law of the unities, according to which a drama should conduct its action on a single scene, should present its events as occurring within the twenty-four hours of a single day, and should admit no incident irrelevant to the development of the single plot. The scene of the *Excursion* is a single setting of the stage, Grasmere and its neighbour Langdale rolled into one, after the poet's usual manner of "composing." The poem's action, from first to last, occupies less than twelve hours. And the incidents gather round a single plot, which is none other than this, that two men go for a walk. The main incident structurally arising from this plot is

the resolve of other two men to join the first two in their excursion; and these four leisurely pedestrians discourse in turn on scenery and local biography. Here is a catalogue of the people who relate these anecdotes or are described in them. The Wanderer, a Pedlar from Athol in the Highlands of Scotland (i. 38); the Solitary, another Scot, compounded with one or two Londoners: the original Scot, says Wordsworth, "was in no respect an interesting character" (ii. 155); the Pastor, of whom his creator remarks, "I had no one individual in my mind" (v. 440); Margaret, a Dorset woman (i. 469); a Grasmere pauper, received into a Langdale woman's house through greed, and given "a kennel" to live in; but the Langdale woman was really a study brought from Patterdale (ii. 738); a Bride from Somerset (iii. 480); an untraceable Knight of Henry VIII.'s time (v. 180); a misty Knight and Lady of Charles II.'s time (v. 186); "Jonathan and Betty Yewdale," inhabiting (seemingly) Hackett House, in Langdale; but the Fenwick note to "An Epistle to Sir George Beaumont" says their name was Oldfield, and they lived in Yewdale (v. 692); an anonymous youth recollected from the poet's schooldays at Hawkshead (vi. 102); a Patterdale miner (vi. 212); two Grasmere young men named Dawson: but one of them turns out, on the testimony of Dr. John Davy, to be Thomas Wedgwood, philanthropist (vii. 695); a couple of political gentlemen inhabiting Hawkshead—one, an exiled Scottish chief, Drummond by name, the other, Sir George Vandeput, from the south of England (vi. 392); a female miser of Grasmere, with a dissolute son (vi. 675); a Hawks-

head girl who bore an illegitimate baby (vi. 786); "Wilfred Armathwaite," of Grasmere, an adulterer (1814 edition of poem), with his fussy wife and frail maidservant (vi. 1079); a widower and six daughters from the Fells (vi. 1116); another Grasmere widower (1814 edition) who was defrauded of his fields after pledging himself as surety for a friend (vi. 1200); Sympson—with his family—a parson from Northumberland (vii. 55) whose described journey to Grasmere is "copied from another instance in real life"; "Wonderful Walker," born at Seathwaite, buried at Seathwaite: the poem treats him as alive but, oddly, predicts his burial at Grasmere (vii. 315); a deaf man, Thomas Holmes, imported from Hawes Water, where, and not at Grasmere, he veritably lies (vii. 395); a blind man, John Gough, similarly raised from his tomb, at Kendal, to furnish a Grasmere grave (vii. 482); a Grasmere woodcutter, "peasant of the lowest class" (vii. 550); a real Grasmere family, the Greens, good people (vii. 632); a "Scottish gentleman" of the Elizabethan age, knighted by Wordsworth as Sir Alfred Irthing; Sir Alfred fictitiously presents to the church a set of bells, really the gift of authentic Grasmere people. Most of the persons in this list—so many of them imported or otherwise "treated"—are supposed, in the poem, to lie buried in the very churchyard in which the poet intended his own bones to rest. Do they not form a strange medley? Does not Wordsworth seem "hard put to it" to fill his churchyard? No doubt it may be urged that, after all, this is a graveyard created by a poet, and he may fill it on any plan that suits him. So be it. But how does Wordsworth figure at

Grasmere as its "historian"? Are these details evidence for, or are they evidence against, affectionate intimacy with Grasmere's family records, on the part of this mighty dreamer? Here, as generally, Wordsworth pictures Man, rather than Men. *Mortalia, haud mortales.*

As the scheme of the *Excursion* is simplicity itself, and occupies only one day, so the story of *The Waggoner* (1806) is just the account of a carrier who uses up twelve hours of darkness in guiding his great wain and his team of eight horses from Ambleside to Keswick. "That far-off tinkling's drowsy cheer" passing Dove Cottage—which was once an inn known as "The Dove and Olive Bough"—it is a sound that through the night to Wordsworth and his sister speaks of loved Cumberland! Benjamin and his horses are bound for their Keswick home. Very direct and simple is the diction of *The Waggoner*, and as impressive as simple is the lurching voyage, through storm, of this wheeled ship of the roads,

> "In pomp of mist or pomp of snow
> Majestically huge and slow."

From Dove Cottage, in 1808, the Wordsworths moved to the roomier shelter of Allan Bank, at the other end of Grasmere village. There Wordsworth, penning the closing pages of the *Excursion* (ix. 53), seems for a moment to carry his mind back to the Beacon (Penrith's "Eminence"), and then imagination changes this into a peak of the true Lakeland:

> "Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
> And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
> As of a *final Eminence;* though bare

ALLAN BANK

(Wordsworth's study-window, lowest on right)

In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power,
A throne that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those
High peaks that bound the vale where now we are.
Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,
With all the shapes over their surface spread:
But, while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems
All unsubstantialised,—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below,
Ascending! For on that superior height
Who sits, is disencumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves
Many and idle, visits not his ear;
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these),
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the Soul, that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterred."

The last days at Dove Cottage and the early months in the new damp house called Allan Bank were not days of happiness to our household. Poverty, honourable as ever, became more of a positive tax on energies when a young family was growing up, when the women of the house had too much to do, when William Wordsworth could scarcely gain a perfectly quiet hour for indoor study, and when Coleridge tarried under the same roof, an incarnation of unhelpful despondency. The little colony, secluded among these mountains, with few intimates and even few local

acquaintances, had almost fallen a prey to the morbidity endangered by "introverted minds." It was well that Wordsworth at this period of cloud and stress when he had

> "breathed
> A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
> Like a fixed centre of a troubled world,"

was able to break away through Kendal to friends at Coleorton and London. A Radical still at the core, on certain points he had become Conservative. Perhaps the chief cause of this modification in his thinking was his disgusted apprehension that the Lake district, which truly was saved only by the advent to the plains of steam power, was about to be exploited for manufacturing purposes by Manchester capitalists. From Allan Bank—giving up thought of building on Place Fell, Ullswater, where Lord Lonsdale had bought him a site—the poet flitted to Grasmere Parsonage for a little, and thence, after suffering domestic bereavement, he passed to Rydal Mount. From the Parsonage he had written to Lord Lonsdale soliciting Government aid, and ere long he acknowledged, first a temporary pension from that nobleman, and, secondly, an appointment as Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland. To this post Wordsworth was enabled later to add a Distributorship for Cumberland, and so ample pecuniary comfort rolled in on him just when the tide of public feeling was beginning also to roll in with favour for his writings. Kendal and Kendal politics—the politics of the Lowther family—now assumed a large place in Wordsworth's thought (hence, to illustrate the drift of argument underlying the present work, the fourth

circle of influences, in the diagram set forth on page 217). Opposing Brougham's parliamentary candidature, Wordsworth had to confess in a letter to Lowther Castle that he had been threatened with a fine of £160 for interfering in politics while holding from Government a local position of emolument. In another letter to Lord Lonsdale, he described himself as meeting under singular political circumstances an old schoolfellow from whom he had been estranged for long:

"Kendal, *Friday Noon*, 13*th February* 1815.

"My Lord,—Three times have I begun to write to your Lordship, since Wednesday afternoon, and have thrown the sheets into the fire, lest, if I wrote with due regard for truth, I should alarm you and your family unnecessarily. Things seem now settled long enough to remove all apprehension. Lord Lowther has been walking about the Town without anything occurring to his annoyance. On the frightful subject of the conduct of the mob I shall not enter at present. Thanks to a merciful Providence, no lives were lost; the persons most seriously hurt belonged to their own Party, with exception of Mr. Fleming of Rayrigg, whom I have seen this morning; and I am sorry to say he remains confined to his bed and sofa at the King's Arms, suffering considerably. A stone, the size of a man's head, struck him on his back, and caused a spitting of blood; but which appears to have ceased.

". . . Lord Lowther has called upon Mr. Wakefield this morning. I have been invited to dine at the house of Mr. John Wakefield, and mean to go. His son, who has canvassed actively for Mr. Brougham, is a very amiable young man, whose acquaintance I shall cultivate. I have already had a long conversation with him on the merits of this contest, in which I omitted nothing that I could think of as likely to open his eyes to its true character. He was manifestly staggered; but he acknowledged that his Father is very violent. The young man is going away for a month, and said that he is heartily glad of it, being sick of the business. Neither he nor the Editor of the paper thinks that Brougham has any chance, and both deem him a person quite unfit to be a County Member.

"The doctrine of our adversaries is, in effect, this; where there is least property let there be most weight, where there is least knowledge let there be most sway. It is worthy of your Lordship to stand forward with all your might against measures supported by such opinions. . . .

"Lord Lowther has had to complain. . . . On Thursday night it was determined that the Town should be canvassed next morning. When the morning came the committee was daunted to a man; and had it not been for Lord Lowther's firmness, no attempt would have been made. He behaved nobly. I breakfasted with him and the Chairman. Mr. W. wished the sense of the Com. to be taken. Lord L. said, 'No, I take it upon myself.' I observed that it was a point of honour, in the case, and *must* be attempted. Mr. W. pleaded fear for their houses and families. Not being an inhabitant, I could go no farther. Lord L. required no support. He proceeded to canvass and did not meet with the slightest interruption. In almost everything Lord L. has had to act against the sense of the Com. This is deplorable. . . .

"I dined at Mr. Wakefield's yesterday. Mr. John W., senior, broke out on the dependent and enslaved state of the County, &c. I said that I had accepted his son's invitation, to testify my respect for his family, and my personal regard for his son; and this subject must be waived. Only I begged to state that as to the fact of the County being represented by two of the Family of Lowther, no person lamented it more than your Lordship. . . ."

This hitherto unpublished document is perhaps too long for these pages, yet it may serve, like the following brilliant letter to the poet from Dorothy (this also, published for the first time), to show how the whole Wordsworth household had been stung into a mood of thought far different from the aloofness to the world that reigned in early days at Dove Cottage:—

"KENDAL, *March 23rd* [1818], 4 o'clock.

"Half an hour ago we came home after seeing the procession, hearing the speech, &c. &c. &c. Long before which time we were waiting at Mrs. Strickland's, a heavy shower of snow and hail came on, which continued during the whole of the harangue. As to the order of the Procession, I can give no account of that.

RYDAL MOUNT

"Except the flying Flags (and they were very gay) all is much prettier laid down in the hand-bill and the *Kendal Chronicle*, which no doubt have reached you ere this. But the multitude of heads, fearless of the storm, one condensed line in motion wedging in the Horsemen and Carriages, which all slowly streamed on together, was grand. If the cause had been better, my feelings as a Spectator would have been really sublime.

"But when you looked at the Individuals who composed it, you could hardly single out a gentleman. Blackguards by the score—and multitudes of young lads. The halt was made at the Bank—God save the King and other tunes played—and a short while after, Mr. B. and his brother had entered Mr. Wakefield's drawing-room. 'Silence' was proclaimed, and the Candidate for the favour of that precious mob-assembly made his appearance at the centre window. But I should first have told you, that the Thompsons, Wybergh, and our Cousin Crackanthorpe had been for some time stationed at the windows —and C. and I exchanged a friendly greeting in which the Misses Thompson joined. But now the Horsemen were gone, and the People condensed at each end pressing up and down so as to get as near as possible to the Orator. Of course when he appeared at the window, he was hailed by a tremendous shout —and when anything fell from his lips that particularly took their fancies, the cry of applause was repeated with more or less vehemence.

"His dress was a dark coat, yellow waistcoat, and a very large blue silk Handkerchief tied round his neck—the streamers hanging down to the bottom of his waist. I assure you he has nothing of a Westmoreland Countenance. I could have fancied him one of the French Demagogues of the Tribunal of Terror at certain times, when he gathered a particular fierceness into his face. He is very like a Frenchman. He opened his speech with most humble thanks to that goodly assembly— not of Freeholders, and indeed you would have supposed he was ashamed of the word—ashamed of the support of Freeholders; for he never once addressed them, never but once used the word Freeholders, and that was merely incidental, speaking of them as having something to do at the Election. He was most grateful for the reception he had met with—he had nothing to lament but the bad weather—which was the only unfortunate circumstance attending this meeting. What a contrast to the memorable 13th!—here he was admonished by his good Friend

William Abbot or some other, it was the 11th—which rather put him out—'I was going to say, Gentlemen, that the only circumstance in favour of our Opponents was the weather! how much are all other circumstances in our favour!' (Loud applause.)

"He then asserted that the Riots were occasioned by the conduct of the other Party—and not a little more of the like in the lowest style of Mob-oratory. It was despicable—the only merit he had as an Orator was that he uttered his words distinctly and had plenty of them at command. He did not intend to detain the Gentlemen long, but he would say a few words respecting the Arts used by the other Party. Among these were writings poured out daily—and now begins his battery against you. One of these venal underhand anonymous writers had taunted him with Poverty. He was the first who had descended to personalities in this contest, a Man who held a sinecure in this County and who had no other property besides—or very little. This man whose writings, &c. &c.—and so he went on abusing them—'I do not speak of his poetry, but his laboured compositions in prose—which would be far harder work for his Readers than the duties of his place furnish him with.'

"After a great deal more of this, of which not a single word as applied to you was understood by any of his hearers except the Faction around him—and our Cousin C., who at the beginning of it gave a significant and good-humoured look at me, and Miss C. says, retired from the window. I was determined to keep my place till he had finished with that subject—from which he turned to the Lowthers and L. Castle—which with eloquence well adapted to his audience, he reminded them used to be called Lowther Hall. He did not accuse the Lowthers of the falsehoods and calumnies so basely uttered, no, he knew my Lord Lonsdale was a man of far too much sense—he then turned to the argument used in their favour of their great wealth, of which you may guess what use he made, and how he was applauded. Again and again he adverted to the reproach against his own poverty, and the poverty and smallness of Westd., using your very words. His next subject was Lord Thanet and the Courier—Lord T. who disdained to use his wealth and power for electioneering purposes! and in the course of this part of his argument he said that if he (B) had one-tenth of the wealth of Lord L—e he would not let one of his Sons receive £11 or £1200 a year from the People—'It comes

out of your pockets'—and in another part of the speech you cannot conceive the bitterness with which he said, 'They have great Riches, but how did they get their riches!' Oh! he looked ready to lead a gang of Robespierrists set to pull down Lowther Castle and tear up the very trees that adorn it. He then—in illustration of what point I have really forgotten—bungled out a quotation from our 'Immortal Poet,' not, as he said, 'that Poet (pointing towards the Ambleside road), you are not to suppose I mean him whose writings I have just been alluding to.' No—the language intended to be uttered no doubt was Shakespeare's, but his memory here seemed to fail him; and as Mrs. Strickland said, 'he put in some words of his own.' Whatever it was he meant to say, I could not hear distinctly what he did say, and I heard every word in all other parts.

"Before concluding, he addressed the Mob feelingly concerning his pretensions to represent them. He had been taunted for poverty, but if he had a penny it did not come out of their pockets. 'Do you recollect my first address?' 'Oh yes, oh yes!' 'In that I rested solely upon my public conduct.' 'Yes, yes;' and, he assured them, he had a fortress as impregnable (clapping his hands on his breast) as Lowther Castle, even if it were as Brougham Castle, and others of the Castles of the Ancient Barons had been, a fortified Hold. He had been charged with being a Party man. He was not so, but he should not detain them, the weather being so bad, by detailing the course of his political conduct, but he assured them, in a great many words, that he had been labouring hard for the repeal of one tax, and he trusted his object would be accomplished. That was the Leather tax, and he would never let it rest. With this promise ended all the Information which he had to give.

"He concluded with his fervent thanks—'thanks! no, it is not for me to thank you, the cause is yours, not mine, and you ought rather to thank me!' (Oh no, his important communications did not end so.) He told them 'the name of a Westmoreland Man in distant parts was hailed with triumph. It was esteemed an honour to belong to that County, and in all parts a Westd. Man was looked up to.' Here he paused—I suppose that the Mob did not understand where they were held in such high respect, so he explained, 'I mean in the South, in Lunnon.' Now, I have done—but I have not given and cannot possibly give you, an idea of the manner in which all this was said, and an important part I have omitted. Towards the end of the harangue,

he told the Mob that among other calumnies it had been asserted that his Opponents had said he intended to withdraw from the contest. 'Do you see anything about me like withdrawing?' (and he fiercely looked defiance). 'No, no; this is but a field-day, and we shall meet again at Appleby, and then you will see who is the first to give out.' In the course of his peroration, his thanks, his leave-taking, he again bitterly lamented the bad weather, but hoped they would not catch cold, and concluded that part of his subject with proud congratulations that they were not afraid of a storm.

"Now I have done. . . . It is plain they have yet a hope of carrying the day by talk on the Hustings. They expect to make a figure there; but they evidently do not expect to go thither prepared with Voters. . ."

So much to indicate the Kendal circle of influence. These documents have been drawn, by the present Earl of Lonsdale's permission, from a bundle of over one hundred political letters written by the Wordsworths. They lie in Lowther Castle. Brother and sister had long watched with dismay the transfer of the Statesmen's small holdings to money-lenders and city manufacturers desiring country quarters. "What else," wrote Wordsworth, "but the stability and weight of a large estate, with proportionate influence in the House of Commons, can counterbalance the democratic activity of the wealthy commercial and manufacturing districts? It appears to a superficial observer, warm from contemplating the theory of the Constitution, that the political power of the great Landowners ought by every true lover of his country to be strenuously resisted: but I would ask a well-intentioned native of Westmorland or Cumberland who had fallen into this mistake if he could point out any arrangement by which Jacobinism can be frustrated, except by the existence

of large estates." And now let us return to the life-work of a poet.

As three circles have been drawn on one of our maps, to show an inner Lakeland within two larger Lakelands, so we might draw circles upon the record of Wordsworth's life to manifest three degrees of his maturity. The inner circle—that of intensest power—would be practically a Grasmere period (1800–1808; Matthew Arnold suggests this limit of 1808). The second circle would rather include the years from 1798 (*Lyrical Ballads*, Alfoxden) to 1818. The year 1818 has been frequently named as closing up Wordsworth's truest creative life with the Lines *Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty*. But the argument of the study now in hand must claim a still wider circle, stretching from the epoch-making *Evening Walk* of 1789 to the purest and most faithful presentment of "Wordsworthshire" to be found in the whole range of the poet's writings—the Duddon Sonnets, finished and published in 1820. For those who dwell in this now famous district, the *Evening Walk* will probably remain what it was when it appeared, the closest appreciation of detail in Lake scenery ever conveyed into verse. The *Sonnets to the River Duddon*, with all their witchery of artistic finish, and with their curious sidelight of classical allusion, are as radiant, and as redolent of home-soil, to any Lakelander, as heather is radiant and redolent to an expatriated Scot. We think, in Lakeland, that the Duddon valley is the sweetest pastoral valley of England; and that is saying much. And Wordsworth thought so too. This is plain in almost every line of these devoutly

truthful poems about Nature. Into them has passed, for the ear of those attuned by attachment to these heights and dales, the very truth of truth that lies in "beauty born of murmuring sound." The *Guide to the Lakes* had been originally (1810) printed to accompany poor drawings of Lakeland by one Wilkinson. But in 1820 Wordsworth republished this prose analysis of the beauty of our meres and streams and valleys as an introduction to the *Duddon Sonnets:* "from a consciousness of its having been written in the same spirit which dictated several of the poems, and from a belief that it will tend materially to illustrate them." Save for the rather jealous line about "sordid industry," we could hardly wish a word changed in this sonnet series. We are well content to acknowledge here the classic poem of Lakeland—of Wordsworthshire; and let the great world enjoy in its general way all the rest of Wordsworth's later lays. Above the lovely music of Duddon now and for ever rises a still more thrilling over-song.

True rings the Dedication of these Duddon poems to the poet's brother:

> "Ah, not for emerald fields alone,
> With ambient streams more pure and bright
> Than fabled Cytherea's zone
> Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
> Is to my heart of hearts endeared
> The ground where we were born and reared.
>
> Hail, ancient Manners! sure defence,
> Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
> Remnants of love whose modest sense
> Thus into narrow room withdraws;
> Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
> And ye that guard them, Mountains old!"

No other passages in the works of Wordsworth speak of Dale customs with such sincere tenderness as the thirteen stanzas composing this Dedication to Brother Christopher. Then in stately ease the sonnets begin, as if the poet had been standing on the summit of Wrynose in company with some lettered officer from Agricola's adjacent camp:

> "Not envying Latian shades—if yet they throw
> A grateful coolness round that crystal Spring,
> Bandusia, prattling as when long ago
> The Sabine Bard was moved her praise to sing;
> Careless of flowers that in perennial blow
> Round the moist marge of Persian fountains cling;
> Heedless of Alpine torrents thundering
> Through ice-built arches radiant as heaven's bow;
> I seek the birthplace of a native Stream—
> All hail, ye mountains! hail, thou morning light!
> Better to breathe at large on this clear height
> Than toil in needless sleep from dream to dream:
> Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free, and bright,
> For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my theme!"

And then, through the ever swifter-leaping series, the glad madness of the crystal river is seen (xx.) to course, to

> "Dance like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
> Tossing her frantic Thyrsus wide and high!"

We think again of *The Danish Boy* as we read (xvii.):

> "A dark plume fetch me from yon blasted yew,
> Perched on whose top the Danish raven croaks."

Dorothy, the sharer in the innocent raptures of childhood at Cockermouth, floats up to the poet's vision through the descending music of this virgin brook (xxv.):

"Methinks 'twere no unprecedented feat
Should some benignant Minister of air
Lift, and encircle with a cloudy chair,
The One for whom my heart shall ever beat
With tenderest love;—or, if a safer seat
Atween his downy wings be furnished, there
Would lodge her, and the cherished burden bear
O'er hill and valley to this dim retreat!
Rough ways my steps have trod;—too rough and long
For her companionship; here dwells soft ease:
With sweets that she partakes not, some distaste
Mingles, and lurking consciousness of wrong;
Languish the flowers; the waters seem to waste
Their vocal charm; their sparklings cease to please."

And from the test of Dorothy's pure presence, this brooder over the still sad music of humanity turns to ponder *mortalia* in the shadows of a Quaker burial-ground (xxix.). Let Canon Rawnsley's beautiful note here illuminate this sonnet for us [Knight's edition of *Poems*, vi. 259]:

"There are few more touching scenes in the Duddon Valley than the little lonely hillside burial-place of the early Friends, spoken of in Sonnet xxix. All round the inside of the rude wall enclosure are still to be seen the stone seats used by the followers of Fox, who were forbidden to hold their meetings under any lower roof than the canopy of Heaven. The Scotch firs have grown into stately shades since the Quakers sat in silent meditation high uplifted above the life of the valley and the noise of Duddon and the tributary stream just opposite. But though the Friends lie here in unvisited graves, the earth is neither blank nor forlorn. Laurels glisten above their rest, and the *Spiræa salicifolia* waves its light wands of flower above their sleep, all evidences of care for the heroes of a cause that is not dead yet."

"No record tells of lance opposed to lance,
Horse charging horse, 'mid these retired domains;
Tells that their turf drank purple from the veins
Of heroes, fallen, or struggling to advance,
Till doubtful combat issued in a trance

Of victory, that struck through heart and reins
Even to the inmost seat of mortal pains,
And lightened o'er the pallid countenance.
Yet, to the loyal and the brave, who lie
In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
The passing Winds memorial tribute pay;
The Torrents chant their praise, inspiring scorn
Of power usurped; with proclamation high,
And glad acknowledgment, of lawful sway."

Whether we wholly agree with him or not, surely we must admit that this was Wordsworth's habitual attitude of mind alike in youth and in the prime of his powers. His sympathies are seldom with the clangorous splendours of life's overt pageant. In human history, as in external nature (*Prelude*, xiii. 45), it is Wordsworth's joy:

"To look with feelings of fraternal love
Upon the unassuming things that hold
A silent station in this beauteous world."

The cool historian values such a thought as much as any poet could do, and presses it to far issues:

"There is no fact of which an historian becomes more steadily or more painfully conscious than the great difference between the importance and the dramatic interest of the subject he treats. Wars or massacres, the horrors of martyrdom or the splendour of individual prowess, are susceptible of such brilliant colouring that with but very little literary skill they can be so portrayed that their importance is adequately realised and that they appeal powerfully to the emotions of the reader. But this vast and unostentatious movement of charity, operating in the village hamlets, and in the lonely hospital, staunching the widow's tears and following all the windings of the poor man's griefs, presents few features the imagination can grasp, and leaves no deep impression upon the mind. The greatest things are those which are most imperfectly realised" (Lecky's *History of European Morals*).

But now with our Poet we reach the outflow of the engentled Duddon, and all is a memory:

"*I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,*
As being past away. Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish; be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know."

This is the loveliest, the only authentic Book of the Brook. It breathes like bonny Kilmeny, "pure as pure could be"; and it is descriptively loyal to its subject; and it overflows with ætherous exhilaration. Whence did Wordsworth, during and after the composition of the sombre *Excursion*, recover moods of this Theocritean joy? Through recollections from early childhood—chiefly at Cockermouth. He has stepped from Westmorland into Cumberland, "to seek the birthplace of a *native* Stream"! "I first became acquainted with the river Duddon in early boyhood." The poet dedicates this work to Christopher in words affectionately reminding him that this Duddon is "one of the most beautiful streams of his *native county*." There is no spell so powerful over the imagination of Wordsworth as meditative recollection of childhood's impressions. From source to port, Derwent and Duddon never cease to be Cumberland rivers. Nor is it completely beside the mark

to add, that he who stands with Wordsworth at the source of either Derwent or Duddon, to track the elusive shimmerings of the stream that from rocky beginnings to its placid sand-endings disentangles the mountains, will find he has turned his back full on Penrith Beacon, and overlooks the inspiring playgrounds of a famous Cockermouth Boy.

APPENDIX

I. WORKS CHIEFLY CONSULTED

Briggs (J.): *Letters from the Lakes.* Kirkby Lonsdale, 1825.
Clarke (J.): *Survey of the Lakes.* 1787.
Coleridge (S. T.): *Biographia Literaria.* London, 1817.
De Quincey (T.): *Reminiscences of English Lake Poets.* Edinburgh, 1817.
Dickinson (W.): *Cumberland Farm Life.* Whitehaven, 1869.
Ferguson (R.): *Northmen in Cumberland and Westmorland.* Carlisle, 1856.
Gibson (A. Craig): *The Old Man* (Coniston). London, 1849.
Gilpin (W.): *Observations on the Picturesque.* London, 1786.
Gough (J.): *Manners of Westmorland.* Kendal, 1817.
Hutchinson (W.): *Excursion to the Lakes.* London, 1776; and *History of Cumberland,* 1794.
Hodgson (J.): *Topography of Westmorland.* Kendal, 1827.
Jollie (F.): *Cumberland Customs.* Carlisle, 1811.
Nicolson & Burn: *History of Westmorland and Cumberland.* London, 1777.
Robinson, H. Crabb: *Diaries.* London, 1869.
Robinson (J.): *Guide to the Lakes.* London, 1819.
Sullivan (J.): *Cumberland and Westmorland.* London, 1857.
Waugh (E.): *Rambles in the Lake Country.* London, 1861.
Walker (J.): *History of Penrith.* Penrith, 1858.
Warner (R.): *Tour through Northern Countries.* Bath, 1802.
West (T.): *Guide to the Lakes.* 7th ed., Kendal, 1799.
Whitehead (H.): *Legends of Westmorland.* Appleby, 1859.
Wordsworth (C.): *Memoirs of W. Wordsworth.* London, 1851.
Worsaæ (J.): *Danes and Norwegians in England.* London, 1852.

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II. NOTES

CHAPTER I

Inglewood Forest.—It is a curious thing that the British Museum Catalogue and Poole's Index to Periodical Literature do not contain reference to even one book or article on Inglewood Forest; but the author has just learnt that Mr. F. H. M. Parker contributed papers on the subject to volumes v., vi., vii. and ix. of the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society* (New Series).

Itinerary for Lakeland.—Any student (perhaps American?) who comes fresh to Lakeland, and desires a hint as to an itinerary of study, is recommended the following course:—

Buy the Oxford one-volume edition of *Wordsworth's Poems* for handy reference, and Myers's *Life of Wordsworth* ("Men of Letters" Series). Travel from London by Carnforth to Barrow (two or three hours for Furness Abbey), then proceed along the Cumberland coast, by Whitehaven, to Wordsworth's birthplace, Cockermouth. Next visit Carlisle and Penrith. Procure a map of the North, and on it draw a circle of a diameter of 15 miles, with Penrith for a centre. With this, ascend Penrith Beacon, and study out the problem of Wordsworth's Renouncement of Inglewood Forest. Visit the neighbourhood, including Ullswater; (Penrith people are delightful: even the "common people" prove uncommon). Train by Oxenholme to Windermere, and thence straight on, by ferry and coach, to Hawkshead. A day or so there, and at Coniston. Back to Windermere; thence, to Ambleside (mountains grow higher, northward), Grasmere, and Keswick. On the journey (best taken on foot) between Ambleside and Grasmere, contrive to see Rydal Mount (private residence) and Dove Cottage (open to visitors, who pay a small fee).[1]

CHAPTER II

Penrith Beacon.—Ann Radcliffe the novelist, in a *Tour to the Lakes* (1795), presents the world with an excellent chapter about the Penrith of Wordsworth's youth. From this chapter the following description of the Beacon is culled:—

"The town, consisting chiefly of old houses, straggles along two sides of the highroad, and is built upon the side of a mountain that towers to great height above it, in steep and heathy

knolls, unshaded by a single tree. Eminent on the summit of this mountain stands the old, solitary Beacon, visible from almost every part of Penrith.

"The Beacon, a sort of square tower, with a peaked roof and openings at the sides, is a more perfect instance of the direful necessities of past ages, than would be expected to remain in this. The circumstances are well known which made such watchfulness especially proper at Penrith ; and the other traces of warlike habits and precautions, whether appearing in records or buildings, are too numerous to be noticed in a sketch which rather pretends to describe what the author has seen than to enumerate what has been discovered by the researches of others. Dr. Burn's History contains many curious particulars ; and there are otherwise abundant and satisfactory memorials as to the state of the debateable ground, the regulations for securing passes or fords, and even to the public maintenance of slough dogs, which were to pursue aggressors with hot trod, as the inhabitants were to follow them by horn and voice. These are all testimonies that among the many evils inflicted upon countries by war, that which is not commonly thought of is not the least ; the public encouragement of a disposition to violence, under the names of gallantry, or valour, which will not cease exactly when it is publicly prohibited ; and the education of numerous bodies to habits of supplying their wants, not by constant and useful labour, but by sudden and destructive exertions of force. The mistake by which courage is released from all moral estimation of the purposes for which it is exerted, and is considered to be necessarily and universally a good in itself, rather than a means of good or of evil, according to its application, is among the severest misfortunes of mankind."

CHAPTER III

Micklebrows.—Information about this path, with other local knowledge, has been kindly afforded by Mr. J. Bolton of Cockermouth.

Moresby Hall in the Olden Time, Whitehaven, 1875, now only to be got second-hand, is a little work of romantic local interest. Fletcher Christian, leader of the *Bounty* mutineers, and his brother Edward were born near Moresby, at Morland Close. Edward was Wordsworth's second head master at Hawkshead (only for a year) and died Professor of the Laws of England, in Downing College, Cambridge.

CHAPTER IV

Fenwick Note.—Wherever such a phrase occurs in this work, the reference is to Notes regarding his *Poems* dictated by Wordsworth, when he was seventy-five years of age, to his friend, Isabella Fenwick. They are to be found in Professor Knight's Edition of the *Poems.*

CHAPTER VIII

"Curwen's Island," Windermere.—Mr. Thomas English, in 1777, began the building of the present round house on this "holm." His treatment of the island aroused the resentment of the neighbourhood, and of writers like Hutchinson and Gilpin—and of Wordsworth himself. The Rev. John Robinson of Clifton, in his *Guide to the Lakes* (1819), says that Miss Curwen, who married her cousin, John Christian (he took his wife's name), bought the island from Mr. English's creditors "between thirty and forty years ago." West's *Guide* (3rd ed., 1784) says, "now the property of John Christian of Unerig." When the poet Gray crossed by the ferry, near this island, he was so nervous about storm and drowning, that he performed the voyage with his head completely enveloped in a sheet. Wordsworth, through one of his sons, became connected with the Curwens, and was fond of staying at the island. But it was often *lent* to honeymooning couples, to his annoyance; so he said it should be ranked as one of the *Borrow-me-an* Islands.

"Meeting of the Ways."—The point near Hawkshead (see Map, p. 99) is suggested by Dr. Cradock as 1, by Professor Knight as 2, by Canon Rawnsley as 3, by Miss Armitt of Ambleside as 4, and by Mr. Gordon Wordsworth as 5.

Schoolmasters.—During Wordsworth's Hawkshead days, these were the head masters of the Grammar School: James Peake (1766–1781 : died Vicar of Edensor, Derbyshire); Edward Christian (1781); William Taylor (1781–1786); Thomas Bowman (1786–1821).

CHAPTER IX

Peele Castle.—At Rampside, near Barrow-in-Furness, Wordsworth spent four weeks of 1794, in full view of Piel (or Peele) Castle, an edifice built on the small island of Foudry (Fudr-ey), by the monks of Furness Abbey in the reign of King Stephen. It is supposed that Foudry meant, in Norwegian, "Fire Island," so called because in far-off times it bore a beacon or lighthouse to guide Norse mariners on their course from Mona to Lancaster. What the Norman monks called their "Piel" would be intended

as a fortified place of refuge and storehouse for church valuables, in case of land attacks on the Abbey. Foudry had a point next the open sea called Fouderness, where probably the light-house or beacon was placed. From "Fouderness" we have "Furness."

CHAPTER X

The Address.—As late as 1843, Professor Henry Reed, of Philadelphia, urged Wordsworth to unravel the tangle of these enthralling poems, and this was the poet's reply: "The character of the Schoolmaster, about whom you enquire, had, like the Wanderer in the *Excursion*, a solid foundation in fact and reality, but, like him, it was also in some degree a composition. I will not, and need not, call it an invention—it was no such thing; but were I to enter into details, I fear it would impair the effect of the whole upon your mind, nor could I do it at all to my own satisfaction."

CHAPTER XII

The Minstrels of Winandermere.—Farish's book was published (1811) by Cadell & Davies, London.

Wordsworth's Early Presentation of Landscape.—Before *An Evening Walk* (1793) several English water-colourists had given proof of keen appreciation of beauty in lakes and their surroundings: for instance, Paul Sandby (1725–1809), "Landscape near a Lake" (1785). William Marlow (1740–1813) and Michael Rooker (1743–1801) and James Baynes (1766–1837) exhibit in their drawings much of Wordsworth's truthful affection for detailed reality. Philip De Loutherbourgh (a Pole, 1740–1812) executed many praiseworthy drawings of the Lakes. J. C. Ibbetson (connected with Sympson of the *Excursion*) also painted Lakeland views. Tom Girtin (1775–1802), teacher of Turner, rose in his genius for landscape pretty nearly contemporary with Wordsworth. See *English Watercolour*, by Holmes and Wedmore (1902).

Evening Walk, 214.—"Fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines its darkening boughs." Have many noticed how, just after sunset, the *hills* recede in much of the landscape, and the *trees* come forward to take up their evening tale?

It is perhaps of some significance that Wordsworth's prose synopsis of *An Evening Walk* deals wholly with the landscape elements in the poem and does not refer to the human element in it.

CHAPTER XIII

Raisley Calvert.—There is room to guess that although William Wordsworth complacently accepted Raisley Calvert's legacy as

wholly a homage to his genius, that gift may have been also a gentleman's tribute to the courage and rosy cheeks of Dorothy. In all the *Lives,* Wordsworth's account of the legacy and other kindred matters, as given to Sir George Beaumont, is reproduced in a puzzling form. The enigma is solved if we realise that the "£100, a legacy to my sister," is not a gift from Calvert, but a remembrance from one of the Crackanthorpes.

CHAPTER XIV

Wordsworth inveighed against white houses among the Lakes. Yet he chose a white house, Dove Cottage, and it remained white while he lived in it, and he whitewashed it anew ere handing it over to De Quincey.

CHAPTER XV

Statesman.—Dr. Murray's English Dictionary informs us that this designation (simply, Estate-man), though doubtless older in popular usage, enters literature in *Annals of Balliston* by Mary Leadbetter (1813). Miss Leadbetter applies the term to Wordsworth's Quaker friend at Yanwath, Thomas Wilkinson, as "one who owns the fee-simple of his land, but works on it himself."

The True Dalesfolk.—Mr. A. Craig Gibson, one of the shrewdest of the writers about Lakeland—and a dweller in the Dales—expressed himself thus in his book entitled *The Old Man* (1849):

"By the way, it is remarkable that, notwithstanding all that has been scribbled anent the Lakes, we are yet without anything like a correct portraiture of the Dales-people. The narratives and traits of character in Mr. Wordsworth's works, though generally striking and beautiful, are, as regards the peasantry, mere emanations of poetic fancy, rather than true delineations of life and manners. The same may be said of Wilson. De Quincey's papers on the population of the Lake district are correct only so long as he confines himself to colonists of his own rank. When he comes lower, it is plain enough to those who know the aborigines, that he has only been permitted to study that (the most interesting) class in their Sunday faces and best behaviour, and that his observation there is rarely more than skin-deep."

Wordsworth wrote to Charles James Fox, in 1801, that: *The Brothers* and *Michael* "were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply. . . . The poems are faithful copies of nature." This last phrase is both true and misleading. It is very doubtful whether those are right who claim that where Wordsworth delineates, he does so with

exceptional fidelity. Rather it seems that, when he chose—as in Langdale noticing that the sun at a particular period of the year is seen to set between the Pikes—he can be exact; but seldom did his mind make such a choice. That mind habitually tended to modify and rearrange its subjects of meditation. He tells us himself that he felt a positive antipathy to "chains of fact and real circumstance." *The Brothers* and *Michael* are only "faithful to nature" in the large sense that they nobly present, with an emphasis Wordsworth was unable to expose in any single life led in his neighbourhood, motives lying deep in the heart of humanity.

Wordsworth's Aloofness.—"I once said to Matthew Arnold," says Lord Morley in his *Life of Gladstone*, "that I'd rather have been Wordsworth than anybody (not exactly a modest ambition); and Arnold, who knew him well in the Grasmere country, said, 'Oh, no, you would not; you would wish you were dining with me at the Athenæum. He was too much of a peasant for you.'" Very characteristic. Wordsworth preferred Helvellyn at his back; Matthew Arnold ("prince of connoisseurs," as Goldwin Smith calls him), the Athenæum. Homely as the companionship of mountains happily teaches all men to be, Wordsworth was no more a peasant than Matthew Arnold was. But Wordsworth never seemed to need companions. Even in his Dale studies, he is chiefly "travelling over his own mind," as Dr. Johnson puts it. So far from being "clubbable" was the poet (in spite of our peeps at him in Lamb's London rooms) that he writes to Lord Lonsdale (1812): I have "an utter inability to associate with any class or body of literary men, and thus subject myself to the necessity of sacrificing my own judgment, and of lending, even indirectly, countenance or support to principles, either of taste, politics, morals or religion, which I disapprove." The expression is ungracious: yet the principle perhaps justified itself—at any rate for a Wordsworth. Chaucer, Tennyson, and others have been cited as English poets truly loving the country, but, for good or evil, Wordsworth remains Nature's authentic Recluse in the story of our greatest singers. Hence it is that his voicing of "Nature" seemed at first unearthly and absurd to his own generation. His finest things made appeal to eyes and ears insufficiently trained by previous poetry.

Seventy-four Tenants at Grasmere.—As some local historians tell us Queen Catharine had only thirty-nine tenements at Grasmere, the true number is noted on the authority of Mr. George Browne of Townend, Troutbeck. The Queen had two manor rolls, thirty-nine tenements on the first, and thirty-five on the other.

Rather Hill.—The old authority from which part of this paragraph is taken says mistakenly that the place was "Ratten

Hill," and that the number of the protesting statesmen was "two thousand." This seems a slip for "two hundred." One or two other writers say "over one hundred."

This chapter has been compiled from oral accounts, and from many of the books mentioned at the beginning of these notes—with special indebtedness to an anonymous article of great charm, about "The Dalesfolk of Cumberland," in *Fraser's Magazine* for 1875.

CHAPTER XVI

Most of this chapter, of course, is a condensed arrangement of Wordsworth's more prominent thoughts on the Dales, and pretty much in the poet's own language. The best edition of the *Guide* is that edited for Frowde (1905) by Professor Ernest de Sélincourt.

CHAPTER XVII

Dread of Nature expressed in Old Ballads.—Alexander Smith points this out on p. 461 of *A Summer in Skye.*

Echoes.—Among the 1800 Grasmere poems is *To Joanna*, in which the poet pretends to the Rector of Grasmere that he had heard Joanna Hutchinson's laugh by the river Rotha's side echoed by Helm Crag, Silver How, Loughrigg, Fairfield, Helvellyn, and away to answering Skiddaw. See *Excursion* (iv. 402) for a true description of a lamb's bleat echoed by many repeating crags. Wordsworth describes *To Joanna* as "an extravagance, though the effect of the reverberation of voices in some parts of the mountains are very striking." Richard Warner, in his *Tour* (1802), says: "The animated, enthusiastic, and accomplished Coleridge inspired us with terror whilst he described the universal uproar that was awakened through the mountains by a sudden burst of involuntary laughter in the heart of their precipices."

CHAPTER XVIII

Grasmere.—Dr. Channing, in 1822, sent home to America the following sketch of Grasmere Lake:

"The lake has not left very definite traces of figure, &c., on my mind, for in such a scene the mind is not stimulated to analyse, the heart and the imagination are too absorbed for curious observation. It is rather circular, and wants the multiplied diversities of outline, the points, bays, and recesses of Windermere; and this perhaps aids the effect, for the eye is not excited to wander in

search of beauties half hid in the mazy openings. The soul is free to receive an unmixed impression from the simple harmonious scene. When it is said that the surrounding mountains are bold, some precipitous, and one of them a rugged steep seamed with storms and strewed with rocky fragments, it may seem strange that the lake can have the character of mild repose which is ascribed to it; but, spreading as it does in a circle, it so parts the surrounding mountains that they cannot be grouped as if they bordered a narrower stream, and thus they become subordinate accompaniments to, instead of being the chief feature of, the prospect. Then the immediate shore of the lake is level and verdant, and blends singularly with the peaceful water. This is particularly true with respect to the vale, properly so called, which spreads between the head of Grasmere and Helm Crag, whose surface is almost as unbroken as the lake, and which, clothed as it is with the freshest verdure, varied by hedgerows, and combining with its natural beauty the most affecting tokens of humanity by its simple cottages and Gothic church, communicates an inexpressible character of peace and benignity, and of gentle and holy sweetness to the whole scene."

Channing from Grasmere paid a visit to Wordsworth at Rydal Mount. "I could not but think of the amusement I should have afforded you, could you have taken a peep at me. I had spent Sunday morning at Grasmere, and in the afternoon, being unable to attend church, I resolved to visit Mr. Wordsworth, who resides two miles and a half from the inn. Unluckily, Grasmere, whilst it supplied the wants of the imagination and heart most abundantly, could not supply me with any vehicle for the body more easy or dignified than a cart, dragged by a horse who had caught nothing of the grace of the surrounding scene.

"After an interview of great pleasure and interest I set out to return, and, unwilling to lose Mr. Wordsworth's company, I accepted his proposition that we should walk together until I was fatigued. At the end of half a mile my strength began to fail, and finding my companion still earnest in conversation I invited him to take a seat with me, which he did, and in this state we re-entered the delightful valley."

John Wordsworth.—In the Memoirs of John Wilson ("Christopher North") we read:

"Wordsworth and his brother came hither across the hills when John was about to join his ship for the last time, and here [Grisdale Scar] they halted before their last farewell. They talked over their future plans of happiness when they were again to meet. As their last act, they agreed to lay the foundation-stone of a little fishing hut, and this they did with tears. They parted there in that dim and solemn place recommending each other to God's eternal care."

CHAPTER XIX

Nature and Man.—Shakespeare cared far more for Man than for Nature: Bacon (in his own way) cared far more for Nature than for Man. Nature to him was not a mystery, but a definite problem that Man would eventually work out clearly. These two gigantic minds, in their attitudes, serve well to show us what position Wordsworth took up: what he made of Man, and what of Nature.

Ruskin tells us how, in the enjoyment of a landscape in the Juras, he endeavoured to imagine the scene deprived of its human associations. [The Lake Country has made little history, and the Highlands of Scotland have made much: Wordsworth's poetic task was thus much more difficult than Scott's.] Ruskin says:

"The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music; the hills became oppressively desolate; a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed creation, is reflected from things more precious in their memories than it in its renewing."

In the *Spectator* for August 20, 1910, appeared a deeply suggestive article written upon this theme by one who dwells at the foot of the Mount Cook range of hills in New Zealand:

"There is no sign of habitation; it is the mighty mountain forms that summon the attention, not their scanty human associations (and this is as your true mountaineer would have it, putting ever still above himself the peaks that he has climbed), and the poor human surnames incongruously allied with these so non-human presences are devitalised by their own inadequacy, and seem merely meaningless. This ocean of the snows, in brief, is so great, the barque of human adventure on it so small, that the effect upon the mind at gaze is that of a quite shipless sea, a solitude utterly inviolate. Yes, let us admit it fully; let us consider it in detail, and confess the complete fact. Man has no influence here. In such a scene as this, surely if anywhere, are to be found the conditions that Ruskin contemplated. It remains to be asked: What, for man, is the sum of them? What is the effect of such a landscape upon its actual, as distinguished from its imaginary, spectator? Is its lack of human association, its detachment from human interest, in reality so chilling and desolating, so very awful? Awe-inspiring, possibly, not awful; chilling and desolating not at all. To the writer, at least, it appears that this separateness,

this aloofness, of the Southern Alps constitutes perhaps their greatest attraction and their chief value to man. For it widely instructs him; it enlarges immensely the horizons of his understanding and of his inner life. In presenting to him Nature (that other half of what Fechner calls the Earth-Soul, at any rate that other sharer with him of this planet), thus isolated and distinct from him and his occasions, it reveals her to him as an integral whole, a true existence, an individual something in terms of her own self, not only of his. How often do we think of Nature so? As man's slave, his tool, his convenience; his nurse, his consoler,

> 'To all always open,
> To all always true';

as his 'feeder with lofty thoughts,' his spiritual admonisher, his witness to the divine—in all these capacities (the rank of them rising, be it observed, step for step with the ennobling of man's needs) Nature, 'inanimate Nature,' as he calls her, has been often recognised and duly valued; but how often in her own right is she recognised and valued because she is herself? And yet to exchange the former view of her for the latter is like taking that great step up out of mere gratitude to a friend for services performed and benefits received, into a comprehension and a love of that friend's faculties and character as they are in themselves, above and past the limits of our needs. It is to become *disin*terested—a mental stage often as far beyond that of being *in*terested as the latter beyond that of being *un*interested—and, in paradoxical consequence, to grow far richer. It is to gain a new world, because a new view of the world. Not morally precisely, not exactly intellectually, but spiritually, *vitally* perhaps, we seem amid these soaring snows ourselves to rise—to attain from virgin mid-air peaks of our own being vast new breadths of vision enabling us to discern, what? That man is not the only real entity on earth? That Nature, 'inanimate Nature,' is also a Soul? That the universe is nowhere mere dead matter, but alive throughout, bright Spirit everywhere? In the solitudes of the sea one sometimes suspects this. In these unpeopled precincts of Aorangi one is sure of it.

"B. E. B."

It is hoped that the writer of that passage, should he ever chance to hear of his being quoted on our page, will pardon this borrowing from his memorable paper.

We can hardly doubt that Wordsworth's Cockermouth ecstasies were of this order of communion with Nature, Man almost apart. He was then a God-intoxicated Boy. This almost paroxysmal

exaltation of spirit through the senses belonged in a marked degree to Thomas Traherne, many of whose pieces, particularly *The Preparative* and *The Vision,* are like Wordsworth thoughts heated seven times over, till the limits of reason seem approached. These poems are too long to quote here, but *The Instruction* may be presented. It comes at least as near to explaining Wordsworth's childhood as anything we have from Vaughan the Silurist.

THE INSTRUCTION

I

Spue out thy filth, thy flesh abjure;
Let not contingents thee defile,
For transients only are impure,
And aery things thy soul beguile.

II

Unfelt, unseen, let those things be
Which to thy spirit were unknown,
When to thy blessed infancy
The world, thyself, thy God was shown.

III

All that is great and stable stood
Before thy purer eyes at first:
All that in visibles is good,
Or pure, or fair, or unaccurst.

IV

Whatever else thou now dost see
In custom, action, or desire,
'Tis but a part of misery
In which all men at once conspire.

CHAPTER XX

The "Prelude."—In the garden of Mrs. Fletcher of Lancrigg much of this poem was dictated. These are the words of Mrs. Fletcher's daughter, Lady Richardson:

"The *Prelude* was chiefly composed in a green mountain terrace, on the Easdale side of Helm Crag, known by the name of Under Lancrigg, a place which he used to say he knew by heart. The ladies sat at their work on the hillside while he walked to and fro on the smooth green mountain turf, humming out his verses to himself, and then repeating them to his sympathising and ready scribes, to be noted down on the spot and transcribed at home."

Dove Cottage is thus remembered by De Quincey: "A little semi-vestibule between two doors prefaced the entrance into what might be considered the principal room of the cottage. It was an oblong square, not above eight and a half feet high, sixteen feet long, and twelve broad, wainscoted from floor to ceiling with dark polished oak, slightly embellished with carving. One window there was, a perfect and unpretending cottage window, with little diamond panes, embowered at almost every season of the year with roses, and in the summer and autumn with a profusion of jasmine and other shrubs. . . . I was ushered up a little flight of stairs, fourteen in all, to a little drawing-room, or whatever the reader chooses to call it. Wordsworth himself has described the fireplace of this room as his

'Half-kitchen and half-parlour fire.'

It was not fully seven feet six inches high, and in other respects pretty nearly of the same dimensions as the rustic hall below. There was, however, in a small room, a library of perhaps three hundred volumes, which seemed to consecrate the room as the poet's study and composing room, and which occasionally it was. But far oftener he both studied, as I found, and composed on the highroad." Wordsworth gives an account of his moods at Dove Cottage in the four sonnets entitled *Personal Talk.* When he temporarily left Dove Cottage in 1802 to be married to Mary Hutchinson he wrote the poem entitled *The Farewell.* The orchard of the cottage is drawn for us in *The Green Linnet, To a Butterfly, The Redbreast Chasing the Butterfly, The Kitten and the Fallen Leaves,* and *Lines written in my Pocket Copy of Thomson's "Castle of Indolence."*

The Wordsworths contemplate Hawkshead and Keswick as Places of Residence.—From some of Dorothy Wordsworth's letters to Mrs. Clarkson, as given in *The Athenæum* for January 23, 1904, these passages are extracted:

"Parkhouse, *January 6th,* 1805.

"We now have little thought of leaving our cottage till Coleridge's return, which surely will not be long—we shall go wherever he goes—and why may not you be near us too?"

"*April 19th,* 1805.

"We look forward to Coleridge's return with fear and painful hope—but indeed I dare not look to it—I think as little as I can of him. Oh, my dear Friend, my heart seems to be shut against worldly hope! Our poor John was the life of the best of all our hopes. I seek to be resigned to the will of God, and find my comfort in his innocent life, and noble death. These contemplations strengthen my inner convictions of the glory of our Nature, and that he is now in blessedness in peace."

"COLEORTON, *November 6th*, 1806.

"Coleridge said he *could* not come to Kendal just to see us and then to part. Notwithstanding this, however, we resolved to see him and wait one day at Kendal for that purpose: accordingly we sent off a special messenger to Keswick to desire him to come over to us; but before 7 o'clock that evening he himself arrived at an Inn, and sent for William. We all went thither to him, and never, never did I feel such a shock as at first sight of him . . . I cannot forgive myself, but I must not take up my paper with regrets and self-accusations but go on with my tale. We stayed with him from Sunday evening till Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock, we (that is Mary and I), but Sarah H. and Wm. did not part from him till the morning following. Alas, what can I say, I know not what to hope for or what to expect; my wishes are plain and fair, that he may have strength of mind to abide by his resolution of separating from Mrs. C. and hereafter may continue unshaken, but his misery has made him so weak and he has been so dismally irresolute in all things since his return to England that I have more of fear than hope. . . . All we could gather from him was that he must part from her or die and leave his children destitute and that to part he was resolved. We would have gone back to Grasmere and taken a house near Hawkshead (Belmont)" [home of Rev. Reginald Braithwaite, then alive], "but this he was against, and indeed it would have been worse than useless; for he gave us a promise to come to us in a month, and if he do part, the farther the better."

"*February 17th*, 1807.

"Coleridge has determined to make his home with us; but *where?* There is no house vacant in the North, and we *cannot* spend another winter in the cottage, nor even a summer with Coleridge and his two Boys, therefore how can we go again into the North this summer? Besides there would be something very unpleasant (not to say *indelicate,* for that in a case of *necessity* might be got over) in going so near to Mrs. Coleridge immediately after their separation; for, after she has been with C. at Ottery, she intends to return to Greta Hall and remain there as long as the Southeys do. At present, after the short consideration we have given the matter, it seems as if we ought to seek out a ready-furnished house in this neighbourhood or further South. Coleridge has an idea that Southey intended leaving Keswick in the autumn, in which case, he wished to have the house, and we consented to take it, though *very, very* reluctantly, Mary and I having many objections to Keswick; and a hundred more to taking Mrs. C.'s place in that house."

No doubt the objections Dorothy and Mary felt to living in Keswick simply arose from a general feeling against towns. No town could be surrounded by more beauty than Keswick, and William Wordsworth, writing to Prince Leopold in 1819, tells that traveller that he should visit Keswick as well as Grasmere and Ambleside—for the views from General Peachy's House upon the Island, and from Friar's Crag, and from the Vicarage of Crosthwaite.

Allan Bank.—See the sonnet about this house (1815), entitled *Even as a Dragon's Eye that feels the Stress.*

Grasmere Parsonage.—Dorothy writes to Mrs. Marshall: "Rydal Mount, Thursday Morning, 1813. Arrived yesterday. The weather is delightful, and the place a paradise; but my inner thoughts will go back to Grasmere. I was the last person who left the house yesterday evening. It seemed as quiet as the grave, and the very churchyard, where our dead lie, when I gave a last look upon it, seemed to cheer my thoughts. Then I could think of life and immortality. The house only reminded me of desolate gloom, emptiness, and cheerless silence."

Rydal Mount.—The best description of Rydal Mount is to be found in Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs*, chap. iii., but it is too detailed to quote here. Crabb Robinson says of the house: "It is so situated as to afford from the windows of both sitting-rooms a direct view of the valley with the head of Windermere at its extremity; and from a terrace in the garden, a view into Rydal Water, and the winding of the valley in that direction. These views are of very different character, and at different periods of the day must supply the deficiencies of each other, arising from superabundance or want of light. . . . Wordsworth himself alludes to the beauty of the situation as being backed and flanked by lofty fells, which bring the heavenly bodies to touch the earth, as it were, upon the mountain tops, while the prospect in front lies open to a length of level valley, the extended lake, and a terminating ridge of low hills, so that it gives an opportunity to the inhabitants of the place of noticing the stars in both the positions here alluded to, namely, on the tops of the mountains, and as winter-lamps at a distance among the leafless trees." One has to remember this situation in reading the lines which Wordsworth wrote as a general preface to his Collected Works. They begin:

> "If thou indeed derive thy light from heaven,
> Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
> Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content."

A view of a projecting point of Loughrigg seen from the windows of Rydal Mount forms the subject of one of the *Miscellaneous*

Sonnets beginning, "Aerial Rock"; another view is given in the sonnet beginning, "Wansfell." The Far Terrace in Rydal Mount grounds is referred to in one of the *Inscriptions* beginning, "The Massy Ways." The Far Terrace ends at a little gate, beyond which there is a spring—the Nab Well, from which the water-drinking poet's glass was filled at meal time. The general surroundings of Rydal Mount are depicted in the poem with the following lumbering title, *Composed when a Probability existed of our being obliged to quit Rydal Mount as a Residence.*

The Waggoner.—The circumstances set out in this poem were vouched by the Southeys as being correct. The Waggoner's real name was Jackson: honest, frugal, yet generous (and a great lover of books), he became tenant of Greta Hall and let half of it to Coleridge. See Sara Coleridge's eulogy of *The Waggoner,* in Knight's edition.

The Packman of the "Excursion."—Coleridge, in the *Biographia Literaria,* asks:

"Is there one word attributed to the pedlar in the *Excursion* characteristic of a pedlar?—one sentiment that might not more plausibly, even without the aid of any previous explanation, have proceeded from any wise and beneficent old man, of a rank or profession in which the language of learning and refinement are natural and to be expected? Need the rank have been at all particularised, where nothing follows which the knowledge of that rank is to explain or illustrate?"

In November 1844 (as Miss Arnold of Foxhow reminds the present writer), Wordsworth came up to Cambridge and stayed some days with Dr. Whewell, then Master of Trinity. Archdeacon Hare asked him to call on Daniel Macmillan, and he paid several visits to the shop, especially one long one in which he dwelt on the influence Scotland had on him in early life, and said he had sought in the *Excursion* to bring out the spiritual life of Scotland, which he thought had never been adequately sung by any of her poets, who had mainly confined themselves to the humanities (*Memoir of Daniel Macmillan,* by T. Hughes, Q.C.).

Excursion, ii. 263–314—*Sacred Function Renounced.*—It is a wonder that Wordsworth could put forth these lines without fearing that they would be taken by many as too applicable to his friend Coleridge.

Excursion, ii. 375—*The Funeral Psalm.*—Wordsworth enjoined it on his family that "should it befall him to die at Rydal Mount, his body should be borne to Grasmere Church on the shoulders of neighbours, no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants bearing it." This solemnity is still observed occasionally in the secluded hamlet of Troutbeck.

Excursion, ii. 650—*The Solitary's Home.*—Here Wordsworth appears to roll into one Hackett Cottage at Colwith and Blea Tarn Cottage. Similarly (v. 79), he compounds Langdale Valley and Grasmere Valley, and converts a Langdale mansion into a Grasmere Parsonage. In book ii. 690, geographical truth gives way to imagination, apparently, for the "lusty twins" (Langdale Pikes) could not be seen, as described, from the cottage window. Grasmere Church (v. 138) is generally regarded as made up by the poet from three churches, those of Grasmere, Bowness, and Hawkshead. The surroundings given to the Grasmere Parsonage in book viii. 440 are mostly imaginary, corresponding neither to the environment of the real Rectory nor to that of the Hackett house which was combined with the Rectory in the poet's picture. In book ix. 495, Grasmere is given *two* islands, one of which, "with birch trees fringed," is imported from Rydal Water; and the lily of the valley is mentioned as growing here, whereas it was only to be found at Windermere.

Readers who have become at all interested in the exposition of Wordsworth's thought attempted in "Wordsworthshire" may care to have by them the following references to a few of the most significant utterances in the *Excursion.* That involved character, the Solitary, perhaps expresses his truest note in the address to Autumn, book iii. 307. A passage in the same book, 820–869, has a double interest, indicating revulsion from the frenzy of the French Revolution, and vaguely yet curiously raising in the reader's mind thoughts of the famous project for Pantisocracy, and of the *Ancient Mariner.* In book iv. 32–65, there is an expansion of *My Heart leaps up:* at 79–102, the thought suggests Traherne, and the *Ode from Recollections;* and the immediately succeeding passage, 102–122, should be compared with the *Prelude,* v. 38; and the echoed bleat of the lamb, 402, is true "Wordsworthshire"; while the longing for a body spiritualised (508–539), is to be noted in connection with Dorothy's jotting on our page 276; the Wanderer's speech (540–549) emphasises the poet's constant recurrence to early impressions at Cockermouth; in lines 779–833, there is a noble idealisation of the pastoral life; nor must the Raven episode, 1156–1187, be passed over, for it is a sublime expansion of Dorothy's note on our page 255. In book v. we have a subtle pronouncement on Ritual, 309–330; at 601–621 a Tolstoyan eulogy of spade and plough; and a definition of Life as Love, 1012-1016. In book vi., the description of a passion-struck man seems to deal with the unknown hero of "'Tis said that some have died of love." In book viii., 305–334, there is a remarkable contrast between the education of the City Boy and that of the Country

Boy, which bears on Wordsworth's own history, as revealed in our quotation on page 84. This must be reckoned as idealism, perhaps, and should be studied side by side with the Recluse's biting speech, 416–433. The opening of the ninth book may be taken as Wordsworth's Apologia; lines 81–92 give Matthew Arnold his theory of a "Stream of Tendency"; lines 113–128, with their protest against any economic organisations that make man "a tool," will interest Tolstoyans; the fame of Wordsworth's plea for Elementary Education, 293–335, cannot justly be discounted by any disappointment we may feel at the results flowing from Mr. W. E. Forster's Act of 1870. The point from which The Pastor delivers the closing Rhapsody is supposed to be half-way up the northern side of Loughrigg Fell.

No doubt there is something in what Hazlitt wrote about the *Excursion*: "Every object is seen through the medium of innumerable recollections, and clothed with the haze of imagination, like a glittering vapour. The image is lost in sentiment, as sound in the multiplication of echoes."

Betty Yewdale (*Youdell*), fifth book of the *Excursion*, lived at Hackett Farm; it was she who dictated to Southey an account of how she and her sister ran away home to Langdale from Dent, when she was "between sebben an' eight year auld, and Sally tweea year younger." This story Southey published in *The Doctor*. As Mr. A. Craig Gibson declares it "the best specimen of our local dialect, and infinitely superior to the well-known Borrowdale letter," the reader may care to glance through this extract:

"It was quite dark afore we gat to Ammelside yat—our feet warr sair, an' we warr nearly dune for—an' when we turnt round Windermer Watter heead t' waves blasht sea dowly that we warr fairly heart-brossen. We sat down on a cauld steean an' grat sair—but when we hed hed our belly full o' greeting, we gat up an' dreed on agean—slaw enough, ye may be sure, but we warr i' kent rwoads . . . . We began ta be flayet at my fadder an' mudder wad be angert at us for running away. It was tweea o'clock in t' mwornin' when we gat to our awn duir. I ca'd out 'Fadder, fadder! Mudder, mudder!' ower an' ower agean. She hard us, an' sed 'That's our Betty voice!' 'Thou's nowt but fancies, lig still,' sed my fadder—but she waddent, an' sea gat up an' open't duir, an' thear warr we stannin' dodderin' an' daized wi' cauld, as nar deead as maks nea matter. When she so us she was warr flay't than we—she brast out a-crying, an' *we* grat, an' my fadder grat an' o', an' they duddent flyte nor sed nowt tull us for running away."

Characters in the "Excursion."—An expert familiar with the district has carefully searched both the Grasmere Church registers and local tradition with regard to these *dramatis personæ*. The following

notes are the result of this investigation. Nothing known of the Wanderer (i. 38), the Solitary (ii. 155), the Grasmere Pauper (ii. 738), the Somerset Bride (iii. 480), Henry VIII.'s Knight (v. 180). The Knight of Charles II.'s time (v. 186) *may* be Sir Daniel Fleming of Rydal Hall, 1633–1701. Elizabeth Youdell (v. 692) died at Rydal, Jan. 14, 1834, aged 64; and Jonathan Youdell died at Rydal, 1841, aged 79; both buried at Grasmere. They had formerly lived at Hackett, where before them lived a family called Oldfield. The Hawkshead Youth (vi. 102) and the Patterdale Miner (vi. 212) are not known. Drummond and Vandeput (vi. 392) are not named in the Registers of Grasmere, Hawkshead, or Bowness. The Female Miser (vi. 675) *may* be Agnes, wife of John Fisher, Townend, buried Jan. 9, 1804, or Mary Fisher of Townend, spinster, buried June 7, 1808; of course Agnes is the more likely. John Fisher of Townend worked for the Wordsworths and was buried April 3, 1820, aged 74. No trace of the Miser's Son (vi. 675), or of the Hawkshead Girl (vi. 786), or of Wilfred Armathwaite (vi. 1079), or of the Widower (vi. 1116), or of the second Widower (vi. 1200). The Reverend Joseph Sympson (vii. 55) lived at Broadrain, the house close to the road on the right-hand side where the Raise ascent begins. It still belongs to the Vicar of Wythburn. Sympson's wife Mary was buried Jan. 27, 1806; Sympson was buried July 2, 1807. Elizabeth Jane, daughter of the Sympsons, married Julius Cæsar Ibbettson of Ambleside. No trace of the Woodcutter (vii. 550). The Greens (vii. 632) are almost the largest landowners in Grasmere. They lived at Pavement End, written Padmire End in the old Registers. Mrs. Green's present house, close to the old one, is called Goldrill Side. Margaret, "wife of John Green of Padmire," was buried December 15, 1792; and her grandfather, John Green of Padmire End, senr., aet. 82, was buried April 10, 1806. There are many Dawsons (vii. 695); "Oswald" *may* be George, son of John Dawson of Ben Place, buried June 24, 1807. "Oswald's" prodigal brother *may* be John Dawson, buried July 1796. "Sir Alfred Irthing" is perhaps Mr. Knott, whose family acquired much property in Grasmere, Rydal, and Coniston. The Knotts did not give any bells to the church, though there is an inscription on one of the bells, "Recast at the expense of Mrs. Dorothy Knott, 1809."

Duddon Sonnets.—Sonnet xxvi. is Wordsworth's childhood epitomised. The succeeding sonnet aims at a gloom contrasting with the joy of xxvi., and therefore it brings before us the melancholy ruins of a feudal castle that never existed in Duddon Valley. Note the artistic motive for this creation:

> "Its line of Warriors fled :—they shrunk when tried
> By ghostly power."

Then xxviii. and xxix. lead us to the spiritual peace and power represented by the unassuming burial-ground of the Quakers.

Wordsworth's Views about Soldiers.—We must not neglect the fact that Wordsworth does turn occasionally—as in the uninspired *Waterloo,* and the inspired *Happy Warrior,* and in a prose passage of his *Letter on the Kendal and Windermere Railway*—specifically to praise soldiers who defend Liberty.

The Danish Boy.—Cumberland (so far as it is not Anglo-Saxon) is more Danish than Norse in stock. Westmorland is more Norse than Danish. The Danes swept over Cumberland from the East Coast. The Norse came from Mona, chiefly by Furness. The chain of hills running westward from Tebay to Wrynose always made a strong barrier between these two peoples, who differed in their language and their customs, and still differ. Cumberland and Westmorland never united for any purpose. It is only in the region of poetical geography that we are able to combine them as "Lakeland," or "Wordsworthshire."

Whatever Wordsworth originally had in his mind when he penned *The Danish Boy,* that enigmatical poem assumes a new meaning when, facing west, we read it by the source of the Duddon, at the boundary-mark between Cumberland and Westmorland.

THE DANISH BOY

[As published in *Lyrical Ballads,* 1800.]

I

Between two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a cottage hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

II

In clouds above, the Lark is heard,
He sings his blithest and his best;
But in this lonesome nook the Bird
Did never build his nest.
No Beast, no Bird hath here his home;
The Bees, borne on the breezy air,

Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers, to other dells,
Nor ever linger there.
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

III

A Spirit of noon day is he;
Yet seems a Form of flesh and blood;
A piping Shepherd he might be,
A Herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in Spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV

A harp is from his shoulder slung:
He rests the harp upon his knee;
And there in a forgotten tongue
He warbles melody.
Of flocks and herds both far and near
He is the darling and the joy;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain ponies prick their ears,[1]
—They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sits alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V

When near this blasted tree you pass,
Two sods are plainly to be seen
Close at its root, and each with grass
Is cover'd fresh and green.
Like turf upon a new-made grave,
These two green sods together lie;
Nor heat, nor cold, nor rain, nor wind
Can these two sods together bind,
Nor sun, nor earth, nor sky.
But side by side, the two are laid,
As if just sever'd by the spade.

VI

There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.

[1] On Wrynose pack-horse track? Herds of ponies were never in those days pastured on these Western hills.

The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove:
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war;
They seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

In his old age the poet told Miss Fenwick that *The Danish Boy* was "entirely a fancy." When first published in *Lyrical Ballads* it followed *A Poet's Epitaph,* which is "entirely a fancy" also. Yet *A Poet's Epitaph* has a profound autobiographical significance among Wordsworth's early writings. Both of the poems here mentioned belong to the Goslar period (1799). *The Danish Boy* was published first in the very year in which Cumberland Wordsworth began living in Westmorland.

With both of these Goslar pieces compare the Alfoxden piece of 1798, in which "Matthew" addresses the young poet :—

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?"

Again, compare, in *The Danish Boy,* the helmet "with a vernal grace," and "one impulse from a vernal wood" in *The Tables Turned* (1798), and that with *A Poet's Epitaph* :—

"The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley he has view'd;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude."

Once more, compare *The Danish Boy* with the Second Part of *Hart-Leap Well* (1800) :—

"The moving accident is not my trade:
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts."

Finally, notice that this peace-loving Youth reappears as a Swiss Boy at the end of the 1822 poem called *The Italian Itinerant and the Swiss Goatherd.*

As there may be young students handling this book, the writer takes the liberty of pointing out to them the immense debt all who love Wordsworth owe to the indefatigable labours

of Professor Knight. Although it has not been used for the present work, Professor Knight's *Life of Wordsworth* in three volumes (1889, Edinburgh) is *the* mine of information about the poet. Professor Knight's eight-volume edition of the *Poems* (Macmillan), with many notes, is, to the writer's mind, a more grateful set of volumes to handle than Professor Dowden's scholarly edition in seven volumes (also Macmillan). Professor Dixon contributes a valuable introduction to well-chosen *Poems of Wordsworth* (Messrs. Jack). Several of Canon Rawnsley's well-known books—such as *Literary Associations of the Lake District* (Maclehose)—contain interesting matter about the poet. Professor Raleigh's power of selecting the significant was never better shown than in his searching yet sympathetic criticism, *Wordsworth* (Edwin Arnold, 1903).

For an obvious reason, the framers of the following Concordance of Wordsworthshire avoided using Mr. J. R. Tutin's *Dictionary of Wordsworth,* a useful Analysis published by the compiler at Hull.

III. CONCORDANCE

SHOWING PERSONS AND PLACES belonging to Wordsworthshire, as referred to in the Oxford University Press single-volume complete edition of Wordsworth's *Poems*.

[With a view to a possible re-issue of this little Dictionary, corrections and additions are invited.]

A

"Abergavenny, Earl of" ("ship": *To the Daisy*), 579 (9)
Airey Force ("torrent hoarse": xlvi. *Itin. Poems*), 478 (3) (28); ("leafy glen": *Airey Force Valley*), 184 (4), 479 (154)
"Allan," Ashburner (*Repentance*), 116 (7)
Allan Bank (xxv. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 266 (11)
Ambleside (*Tour in Italy*), 353 (30); (town: xliii. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 282
"Andrew" (*Oak and Broom*), 155 (1); (*To a Sexton*) 157 (12)
"Anna" (*Liberty*), 527 (2)
Anne, Countess of Pembroke ("Lady": xxiv. *Yarrow Revisited*), 393
Appleby (xxiv. *Yarrow Revisited*), 393
Appleby Castle ("keepeth watch": *Song at Brougham Castle*), 204 (46)
Applethwaite, Keswick ("Dell": iv. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 251
Armathwaite, Wilfred (*Excursion*, vi.), 845 (1078)
Ashburner, Margaret (*Repentance*), 116

B

Barton Fell ("the moor": *Resolution and Ind.*), 195 (15)
Bateman, Richard (*Michael*), 135 (258)
Beaumont, Sir George (iv. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 251; (ix. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 252; (ii. *Tour in Italy*), 358; (i. *Miscell. Poems*), 521; (i. *Inscriptions*), 546; (*Elegiac Stanzas*), 578, 582
Beaumont, Lady (xviii. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 264
Bega, St., *see* St. Bees
Bekangs Ghyll ("Vale of Nightshade": *Prelude*, ii.), 643 (103); (*Prelude*, x.), 727 (598)
"Bell, Adam" (xxi. *Yarrow Rev.*), 393
"Bell, Peter" (*Peter Bell*), 238 (170); (xviii. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 254
"Benjamin" (*Waggoner*), 173 (23)
"Bess" (*Peter Bell*), 238 (176)
Black Comb ('dread name": *View from the Top of Black Comb*), 218 (2); ("heights of": xii. *Itin. Poems*), 468 (1); ("huge": i. *Miscell. Poems*), 521 (5); ("seat": vi. *Inscriptions*), 548 (2)
Blackett, Miss ("Inmate": *To* ——), 217 (1)
Blake Rigg ("those ramparts": *Excursion*, iv.), 808 (494)
Blea Tarn ("among yon mountain fastnesses": *Excursion*, ii.), 774 (156); ("liquid pool": *Excursion*, ii.), 776 (338); ("yon pool": *Excursion*, iv.), 808 (457)
Blea Tarn House ("our bare dwelling": *Excursion*, ii.), 776 (339); ("the cottage": *Excursion*, ii.), 781 (638); ("cottage": *Excursion*, ix.), 895 (774)
Blencathara, mountain (*Waggoner*), 180 (46); (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 204 (90)
Borrowdale ("fraternal four of B": *Yew Trees*), 185 (14)
Borwick Ground ("meeting-point of two highways": *Prelude*, xii.), 738 (293)
Bowscale-tarn (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 205 (123)
Bowness ("within the crescent": *Prelude*, ii.), 644 (139)
Braithwaite, George ("man that keeps the ferry": *Waggoner*), 179 (123); ("Ferryman": *Prelude*, iv.), 658 (13)
Braithwaite, Rev. R.? (*Address*) 577
Braithwaite, Rev. W. (*Lines*), 22 (8); ("studious friend": *Prelude*, v.), 666 (51)

Brigham, Nun's Well (viii. *Itin. Poems*), 465 (7); ("walls": ix. *Itin. Poems*), 465 (2)
Brother's Water ("the lake": *Written in March*), 190 (4).
Brough-under-Stainmore, Castle (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 204 (44)
Brougham Castle (*S. at Feast of*), 203; ("monastic castle": *Prelude*, vi.), 678 (205)
Broughton ("Druid stones": *Evening Walk*), 594 (171)
Buttermere ("maid of": *Prelude*, vii.) 691 (297); ("mountain chapel": *Prelude*, vii.), 692 (324); Fish Inn (*Prelude*, vii.), 691 (305)

C

Calvert, Raisley (xxxvi. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 259; (*Prelude*, xiv.), 751 (355)
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Cartmell Churchyard (*Prelude*, x.), 726 (533)
Cartmell Sands (*Prelude*, ii.), 644 (137); (*Prelude*, x.), 726 (561)
Castrigg (*Waggoner*), 180 (61)
Chapel Island (*Prelude*, x.), 726 (555)
Chapel stile ("yon village green": *Prelude*, viii.), 699 (5); ("wake": *Excursion*, ii.), 773 (120)
Cherry Tree Inn ("dinning from the C. T.": *Waggoner*), 176 (22)
Claife ("open heights": *Prelude*, i.), 636 (311)
Clifford, Lord (*The Borderers*), 43 (345); (*Waggoner*), 180 (48); (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 204 (23)
Clifford, Margaret ("Mother": *S. at Brougham Castle*), 204 (54)
"Clym of the Clough" (xxi. *Yarrow Rev.*), 393
Cockermouth ("my birth place": *Prelude*, i.), 636 (303); ("my father's house": v.), 672 (477); ("domains of rural peace": viii.), 700 (73); ("a poor district": ix.), 712 (215); ("home": xii.), 738 (291)
Cockermouth Castle ("Spirit of": vii. *Itin. Poems*), 464; ("those towers": *Prelude*, i.), 636 (283)
Coleridge, Hartley (*To H. C.*), 88
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (Advertisement to *Prelude*), 631; (*Prelude*, i.), 632 (46); ii., 642 (1); iii., 653 (309); iv., 659 (78); v., 668 (181); vi., 678 (198); vi., 678 (228); vii., 687 (12); vii., 691 (296); viii., 704 (340); ix, 709 (7); x., 721 (235); xi., 731 (282); xii., 735 (44); xiii., 744 (299); xiv., 750 (276); (*Preface* 1814 *Ed. Excursion*), 754 (40); (*Death of James Hogg*), 586 (15); (*Stanzas*), 107 (1); (iv. *Poems on Naming of Places*), 148 (6)
Coleridge, Sara ("Last of the Three": *The Triad*), 222 (174)
Colthouse, Esthwaite (*Prelude*, iv.), 659 (33)
Colwith, Hackett Cottage ("one bare dwelling": *Excursion*, ii.), 776 (339); ("the cottage": *Excursion*, ii.), 781 (638)
Conishead Priory ("famed temple": *Prelude*, ii.), 643 (101)
Coniston Lake ("Thurston Mere": *Prelude*, viii.), 706 (459)
Coniston mountains (*Excursion*, ii.), 776 (325)
Coniston Old Man (*Prelude*, iv.), 663 (327)
Corby, Nunnery Dell (xli. *Itin. Poems*), 476 (13)
Corby, Wetheral Church ("sculpture here": xxxix. *Itin. Poems*), 476 (3)
Crossfell ("stormy": *Prelude*, vi.) 678 (209)
Crossfell, Chain of ("Pennine Alps": xli. *Itin. Poems*), 476 (2)
Crosthwaite Church ("less simple districts": *Excursion*, vi.), 847 (624); (xvii. *Epitaphs*), 587
Cuthbert, St., *see* St. Cuthbert

D

Dale End, Grasmere? ("green pasture": *Excursion*, v.), 832 (642)
Dawson, Oswald (*Excursion*, vii.), 868 (706)
Dawson ("Prodigal": *Excursion*, vi.), 842 (287)
Derwent, River ("hoary": *An Evening Walk*), 591 (3); (*Guilt and Sorrow*), 28 (199); ("loved stream": v. *Itin. Poems*), 464 (1); ("flowing near": viii. *Itin. Poems*), 465 (5); ("fairest of all": *Prelude*, i.), 636 (270); ("murmuring stream": *Prelude*, v.), 673 (484); (*Prelude*, ix.), 715 (393)
Derwent Water ("listen to the roar": *Evening Walk*), 2 (3); ("the lake": xv. *Inscriptions*), 551 (18); (*Floating Island*), 531 (10)
Derwent Water, Island on, the Hermitage ("quiet spot": xv. *Inscriptions*), 551 (5)
Donnerdale ("merry pranks of": xiii., *River Duddon*), 379; (the plain of: xx. *River Duddon*), 381
Drummond ("a chieftain": *Excursion*, vi.) 844 (413)
Duddon, River (Sonnets to *Duddon River*), 375; ("Cerulean": i. *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*), 418; ("neighbouring vale": *Excursion*, vii.), 862 (315)

Dungeon Ghyll (*Idle Shepherd Boys*), 84
Dunmail, King (*Waggoner*), 176 (210)
Dunmail-Raise (*Michael*), 133 (134); (*Waggoner*), 174 (100), 175 (140); ("outlet": *Excursion*, vii.), 858 (49); ("a gap": *Excursion*, vii.), 859 (142)

E

Eamont, River ("banks of": *Prelude*, vi.), 678 (204, 211); (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 203 (2); ("fair house by": *S. at Brougham Castle*), 204; (*To the Spade of a Friend*), 489 (2)
Easedale (*Michael*), 133 (134); ("black recess": xxiv. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 266 (3); ("mountain cove": *Excursion*, ix.), 894 (688); ("brook": xxxi. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 268
Eden, River (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 204 (47); (xxxviii. *Itin. Poems*), 476 (1); (xli. *Itin. Poems*), 476 (3)
"Eglamore, Sir" (xlvi. *Itin. Poems*), 478 (24)
Egremont (*The Brothers*), 100 (311), 102 (428)
Egremont Castle (*Horn of Egremont Castle*), 535 (8)
"Ellen" (*The Childless Father*), 120 (18); (*Excursion*, vi.), 850 (816)
"Emma" ("a Jewel": xlvi. *Itin. Poems*), 478 (14)
Emma's Dell ("name of E.'s D.": *Poems on Naming of Places*), 146 (47)
Enna River (*The Brothers*), 100 (311)
Ennerdale ("church": *The Brothers*), 95 (12); ("priest of": *The Brothers*), 95 (16)
Esk, River (*The Borderers*), 38 (62); (*The Borderers*), 46 (479)
Eskdale (*Borderers*), 95 (16)
Esthwaite ("my E.'s shore": *An Evening Walk*), 591 (15); ("trembling lake": *Influence of Natural Objects*), 89 (20); ("pleasant shore": vi. *Poems on Naming of Places*), 150 (67); (*Expostulation and Reply*), 481 (13); (*An Evening Walk*), 591 (15); ("that beloved Vale": *Prelude*, i.), 636 (304); ("trembling lake": i.), 638 (420); ("fields of ice": i.), 640 (539); ("one dear Vale": ii.), 645 (197); ("our little lake": ii.), 647 (331); ("Vale yet slumbering": il.), 647 (344); ("our little lake": iv.), 660 (138); ("narrow vale": iv.), 661 (199); ("in the Vale": iv.), 664 (384); ("sweet valley": v.), 672 (428); ("misty lake": v.), 674 (563); vi., 675 (1); x., 725 (524); heading to *Lines*), 22
"Evening Star, The" (name of cottage: *Michael*), 133 (139)
"Ewbank, Walter" (*Brothers*), 98 (200)
"Ewbank, Leonard" (*Brothers*), 99 (249)

F

Fairfield (*To Joanna*), 147 (60); ("high peaks": *Excursion*, ix.), 885 (59); (*Waggoner*), 182 (234); (Ambleside: xxx. *Tour in Italy*), 353 (30); (*To the Lady Fleming*), 534 (86)
Fawcett ("Solitary," "lay preacher": *Excursion*, ii.), 774 (159)
"Fell, Alice" (*Alice Fell*), 82 (43)
Fell Foot ("small opening": *Excursion*, ii.), 776 (335); ("small chapel": *Excursion*, ii.), 784 (814)
Fisher, George (*Rural Architecture*), 86 (1)
Fleming, Charles (*Rural Architecture*), 86 (1)
Fleming, John ("a dear friend": *Prelude*, v.), 674 (561)
Fleming, Lady ("O lady": *To the Lady Fleming*), 533 (11)
Fleming, Rev. J. ("a friend": *Prelude*, ii.), 647 (333)
Fleming, Sir William (*Inscriptions*, vii.), 549 (2)
Fletcher, Mrs. William ("Anna": xiii. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 273 (1)
"Foy, Betty" (*The Idiot Boy*), 126 (8)
Furness Abbey (xlvii. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 283; (xlviii. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 283; (*Prelude*, ii.), 643 (103); (*Prelude*, ii.), 644 (120); (*Prelude*, x.), 727 (598)
Furness Fells (i. *Miscell. Sonnets*), 250

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"Gale, Susan" (*The Idiot Boy*), 126 (18)
"Geraldine" (x. *Poems of Affection*), 109
Ghimmer Crag (*Waggoner*), 180 (21)
Glaramara (*To Joanna*), 147 (64); (*Yew Trees*), 185 (33)
Glencoign (*Tour in Italy*), 353 (49)
Glenderamakin (*S. at Brougham Castle*), 204 (92)
Glenridding-screes (*Tour in Italy*), 353 (49)
Glow-worm Rock (*Primrose of the Rock*), 224 (1); (*Inscriptions*), 550 (9)
Goldrill (*Excursion*, vii.), 867 (637)
Gough, Charles (*Fidelity*), 491 (39)
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